PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

From a painting made at Rome in 1819 by Miss Curran

THE COMPLETE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

THIS edition of his *Poetical Works* contains all Shelley's ascertained poems and fragments of verse that have hitherto appeared in print. In preparing the volume I have worked as far as possible on the principle of recognizing the *editio princeps* as the primary textual authority. I have not been content to reprint Mrs. Shelley's recension of 1839, or that of any subsequent editor of the *Poems*. The present text is the result of a fresh collation of the early editions; and in every material instance of departure from the wording of those originals the rejected reading has been subjoined in a footnote. Again, wherever—as in the case of *Julian and Maddalo*—there has appeared to be good reason for superseding the authority of the *editio princeps*, the fact is announced, and the substituted exemplar indicated, in the Prefatory Note. In the case of a few pieces extant in two or more versions of debatable authority the alternative text or texts will be found at the foot of the page; but it may be said once for all that this does not pretend to be a *variorum* edition, in the proper sense of the term—the textual apparatus does not claim to be exhaustive. Thus I have not thought it necessary to cumber the footnotes with every minute grammatical correction introduced by Mrs. Shelley, apparently on her own authority, into the texts of 1839; nor has it come within the scheme of this edition to record every conjectural emendation adopted or proposed by Rossetti and others in recent times. But it is hoped that, up to and including the editions of 1839 at least, no important variation of the text has been overlooked. Whenever a reading has been adopted on MS. authority, a reference to the particular source has been added below.

I have been chary of gratuitous interference with the punctuation of the MSS. and early editions; in this direction, however, some revision was indispensable. Even in his most carefully finished 'fair copy' Shelley under-punctuates[1], and sometimes punctuates capriciously. In the very act of transcribing his mind was apt to stray from the work in hand to higher things; he would lose himself in contemplating those airy abstractions and lofty visions of which alone he greatly cared to sing, to the neglect and detriment of the merely external and formal element of his song. Shelley recked little of the jots and tittles of literary craftsmanship; he committed many a small sin against the rules of grammar, and certainly paid but a halting attention to the nice distinctions of punctuation. Thus in the early editions a comma occasionally plays the part of a semicolon; colons and semicolons seem to be employed interchangeably; a semicolon almost invariably appears where nowadays we should employ the dash; and, lastly, the dash itself becomes a point of all work, replacing indifferently commas, colons, semicolons or periods. Inadequate and sometimes haphazard as it is, however, Shelley's punctuation, so far as it goes, is of great value as an index to his metrical, or at times, it may be, to his rhetorical intention—for, in Shelley's hands, punctuation serves rather to mark the rhythmical pause and onflow of the verse, or to secure some declamatory effect, than to indicate the structure or elucidate the sense. For this reason the original pointing has been retained, save where it tends to obscure or pervert the poet's meaning. Amongst the Editor's Notes at the end of the volume the reader will find lists of the punctual variations in the longer poems, by means of which the supplementary points now added may be identified, and the original points, which in this edition have been deleted or else replaced by others, ascertained, in the order of their occurrence. In the use of capitals Shelley's practice has been followed, while an attempt has been made to reduce the number of his inconsistencies in this regard.

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[1] Thus in the exquisite autograph 'Hunt MS.' of *Julian and Maddalo*, Mr. Buxton Forman, the most conservative of editors, finds it necessary to supplement Shelley's punctuation in no fewer than ninety-four places.

To have reproduced the spelling of the MSS. would only have served to divert attention from Shelley's poetry to my own ingenuity in disgusting the reader according to the rules of editorial punctilio[1]. Shelley was neither very accurate, nor always consistent, in his spelling. He was, to say the truth, indifferent about all such matters: indeed, to one absorbed in the spectacle of a world travailing for lack of the gospel of *Political Justice*, the study of orthographical niceties must have seemed an occupation for Bedlamites. Again—as a distinguished critic and editor of Shelley, Professor Dowden, aptly observes in this connexion—'a great poet is not of an age, but for all time.' Irregular or antiquated forms such as 'recieve,' 'sacrifize,' 'tyger,' 'gulph,' 'desart,' 'falshood,' and the like, can only serve to distract the reader's attention, and mar his enjoyment of the verse. Accordingly Shelley's eccentricities in this kind have been discarded, and his spelling revised in accordance with modern usage. All weak preterite-forms, whether indicatives or participles, have been printed with *ed* rather than *t*, participial adjectives and substantives, such as 'past,' alone excepted. In the case of 'leap,' which has two preterite-forms, both employed by Shelley[2]—one with the long vowel of the present-form, the other with a vowel-change[3] like that of 'crept' from 'creep'—I have not hesitated to print the longer form 'leaped,' and the shorter (after Mr. Henry Sweet's example) 'lept,' in order clearly to indicate the pronunciation intended by

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[1] I adapt a phrase or two from the preface to *The Revolt of Islam*.

[2] See for an example of the longer form, the *Hymn to Mercury*, xviii. 5, where 'leaped' rhymes with 'heaped' (l. 1). The shorter form, rhyming to 'wept,' 'adapt,' &c., occurs more frequently.

[3] Of course, wherever this vowel-shortening takes place, whether indicated by a corresponding change in the spelling or not, *t*, not *ed* is properly used—'cleave,' 'cleft'; 'deal,' 'dealt'; &c. The forms discarded under the general rule laid down above are such as 'wrackt,' 'prankt,' 'snatcht,' 'kist,' 'opprest,' &c.

Shelley. In the editions the two vowel-sounds are confounded under the one spelling, 'leapt.' In a few cases Shelley's spelling, though unusual or obsolete, has been retained. Thus in 'aethereal,' 'paean,' and one or two more words the *ae* will be found, and 'airy' still appears as 'aëry.' Shelley seems to have uniformly written 'lightening': here the word is so printed whenever it is employed as a trisyllable; elsewhere the ordinary spelling has been adopted[1].

The editor of Shelley to-day enters upon a goodly heritage, the accumulated gains of a series of distinguished predecessors. Mrs. Shelley's two editions of 1839 form the nucleus of the present volume, and her notes are here reprinted in full; but the arrangement of the poems differs to some extent from that followed by her—chiefly in respect of *Queen Mab*, which is here placed at the head of the *Juvenilia*, instead of at the forefront of the poems of Shelley's maturity. In 1862 a slender volume of poems and fragments, entitled *Relics of Shelley*, was published by Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B.—a precious sheaf gleaned from the MSS. preserved at Boscombe Manor. The *Relics* constitute a salvage second only in value to the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824. To the growing mass of Shelley's verse yet more material was added in 1870 by Mr. William Michael Rossetti, who edited for Moxon the *Complete Poetical Works* published in that year. To him we owe in particular a revised and greatly enlarged version of the fragmentary drama of *Charles I*. But though not seldom successful in restoring the text, Mr. Rossetti pushed revision beyond the bounds of prudence, freely correcting grammatical errors, rectifying small inconsistencies in the sense, and too lightly adopting conjectural emendations on the grounds of rhyme or metre. In the course of an article published in the *Westminster Review* for July, 1870, Miss Mathilde Blind, with the aid of material furnished by Dr. Garnett, 'was enabled,' in the words of Mr. Buxton Forman, 'to supply omissions, make authoritative emendations, and controvert erroneous changes' in Mr. Rossetti's work; and in the more cautiously edited text of his later edition, published by Moxon in 1878, may be traced the influence of her strictures.

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[1] Not a little has been written about 'uprest' (*Revolt of Islam*, III. xxi. 5), which has been described as a nonce-word deliberately coined by Shelley 'on no better warrant than the exigency of the rhyme.' There can be little doubt that 'uprest' is simply an overlooked misprint for 'uprist'—not by any means a nonce-word, but a genuine English verbal substantive of regular formation, familiar to many from its employment by Chaucer. True, the corresponding rhyme-words in the passage above referred to are 'nest,' 'possessed,' 'breast'; but a laxity such as 'nest'—'uprist' is quite in Shelley's manner. Thus in this very poem we find 'midst'—'shed'st' (VI. xvi), 'mist'—'rest'—'blest' (V. lviii), 'loveliest'—'mist'—'kissed'—'dressed' (V. xliii). Shelley may have first seen the word in *The Ancient Mariner*; but he employs it more correctly than Coleridge, who seems to have mistaken it for a preterite-form (= 'uprose'), whereas in truth it serves either as the third person singular of the present (= 'upriseth'), or, as here, for the verbal substantive (= 'uprising').

Six years later appeared a *variorum* edition in which for the first time Shelley's text was edited with scientific exactness of method, and with a due respect for the authority of the original editions. It would be difficult indeed to over-estimate the gains which have accrued to the lovers of Shelley from the strenuous labours of Mr. Harry Buxton Forman, C.B. He too has enlarged the body of Shelley's poetry[1]; but, important as his additions undoubtedly are, it may safely be affirmed that his services in this direction constitute the least part of what we owe him. He has vindicated the authenticity of the text in many places, while in many others he has succeeded, with the aid of manuscripts, in restoring it. His untiring industry in research, his wide bibliographical knowledge and experience, above all, his accuracy, as invariable as it is minute, have combined to make him, in the words of Professor Dowden, 'our chief living authority on all that relates to Shelley's writings.' His name stands securely linked for all time to Shelley's by a long series of notable works, including three successive editions (1876, 1882, 1892) of the Poems, an edition of the Prose Remains, as well as many minor publications—a Bibliography (*The Shelley Library*, 1886) and several Facsimile Reprints of the early issues, edited for the Shelley Society.

To Professor Dowden, whose authoritative Biography of the poet, published in 1886, was followed in 1890 by an edition of the Poems (Macmillans), is due the addition of several pieces belonging to the juvenile period, incorporated by him in the pages of the *Life of Shelley*. Professor Dowden has also been enabled, with the aid of the manuscripts placed in his hands, to correct the text of the *Juvenilia* in many places. In 1893 Professor George E. Woodberry edited a *Centenary Edition of the Complete Poetical Works*, in which, to quote his own words, an attempt is made 'to summarize the labours of more than half a century on Shelley's text, and on his biography so far as the biography is bound up with the text.' In this Centenary edition the textual variations found in the Harvard College MSS., as well as those in the MSS. belonging to Mr. Frederickson of Brooklyn, are fully recorded. Professor Woodberry's text is conservative on the whole, but his revision of the punctuation is drastic, and occasionally sacrifices melody to perspicuity.

In 1903 Mr. C. D. Locock published, in a quarto volume of seventy-five pages, the fruits of a careful scrutiny of the Shelley MSS. now lodged in the Bodleian Library. Mr. Locock succeeded in recovering several inedited fragments of verse and prose. Amongst the poems chiefly concerned in the results of his *Examination* may be named *Marenghi*, *Prince Athanase*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *To Constantia*, the *Ode to Naples*, and (last, not least) *Prometheus Unbound.* Full use has been made in this edition of Mr. Locock's collations, and the fragments recovered and printed by him are included in the text. Variants derived from the Bodleian MSS. are marked *B.* in the footnotes.

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[1] Mr. Forman's most notable addition is the second part of *The Daemon of the World*, which he printed privately in 1876, and included in his Library Edition of the *Poetical Works* published in the same year. See the *List of Editions*, &c. at the end of this volume.

On the state of the text generally, and the various quarters in which it lies open to conjectural emendation, I cannot do better than quote the following succinct and luminous account from a *Causerie* on the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library, contributed by Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., to the columns of *The Speaker* of December 19, 1903:—

'From the textual point of view Shelley's works may be divided into three classes—those published in his lifetime under his own direction; those also published in his lifetime, but in his absence from the press; and those published after his death. The first class includes *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam*, and *Alastor* with its appendages, published in England before his final departure for the continent; and *The Cenci* and *Adonais*, printed under his own eye at Leghorn and Pisa respectively. Except for some provoking but corrigible misprints in *The Revolt of Islam* and one crucial passage in *Alastor*, these poems afford little material for conjectural emendation; for the Alexandrines now and then left in the middle of stanzas in *The Revolt of Islam* must remain untouched, as proceeding not from the printer's carelessness but the author's. The second class, poems printed during Shelley's lifetime, but not under his immediate inspection, comprise *Prometheus Unbound* and *Rosalind and Helen*, together with the pieces which accompanied them, *Epipsychidion*, *Hellas*, and *Swellfoot the Tyrant.* The correction of the most important of these, the *Prometheus*, was the least satisfactory. Shelley, though speaking plainly to the publisher, rather hints than expresses his dissatisfaction when writing to Gisborne, the corrector, but there is a pretty clear hint when on a subsequent occasion he says to him, "I have received *Hellas*, which is prettily printed, and with fewer mistakes than any poem I ever published." This also was probably not without influence on his determination to have *The Cenci* and *Adonais* printed in Italy. . . . . Of the third class of Shelley's writings—those which were first published after his death—sufficient facsimiles have been published to prove that Trelawny's graphic description of the chaotic state of most of them was really in no respect exaggerated. . . . . The difficulty is much augmented by the fact that these pieces are rarely consecutive, but literally *disiecti membra poetae*, scattered through various notebooks in a way to require piecing together as well as deciphering. The editors of the Posthumous Poems, moreover, though diligent according to their light, were neither endowed with remarkable acumen nor possessed of the wide knowledge requisite for the full intelligence of so erudite a poet as Shelley, hence the perpetration of numerous mistakes. Some few of the MSS., indeed, such as those of *The Witch of Atlas*, *Julian and Maddalo*, and the *Lines at Naples*, were beautifully written out for the press in Shelley's best hand, but their very value and beauty necessitated the ordeal of transcription, with disastrous results in several instances. An entire line dropped out of the *Lines at Naples*, and although *Julian and Maddalo* was extant in more than one very clear copy, the printed text had several such sense-destroying errors as *least* for *lead*.

'The corrupt state of the text has stimulated the ingenuity of numerous correctors, who have suggested many acute and convincing emendations, and some very specious ones which sustained scrutiny has proved untenable. It should be needless to remark that success has in general been proportionate to the facilities of access to the MSS., which have only of late become generally available. If Shelley is less fortunate than most modern poets in the purity of his text, he is more fortunate than many in the preservation of his manuscripts. These have not, as regards a fair proportion, been destroyed or dispersed at auctions, but were protected from either fate by their very character as confused memoranda. As such they remained in the possession of Shelley's widow, and passed from her to her son and daughter-in-law. After Sir Percy Shelley's death, Lady Shelley took the occasion of the erection of the monument to Shelley at University College, Oxford, to present [certain of] the MSS. to the Bodleian Library, and verse and sculpture form an imperishable memorial of his connection with the University where his residence was so brief and troubled [1].'

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[1] Dr. Garnett proceeds :—'The most important of the Bodleian MSS. is that of *Prometheus Unbound*, which, says Mr. Locock, has the appearance of being an intermediate draft, and also the first copy made. This should confer considerable authority on its variations from the accepted text, as this appears to have been printed from a copy not made by Shelley himself. "My *Prometheus*," he writes to Ollier on September 6, 1819, "is now being transcribed," an expression which he would hardly have used if he had himself been the copyist. He wished the proofs to be sent to him in Italy for correction, but to this Ollier objected, and on May 14, 1820, Shelley signifies his acquiescence, adding, however, "In this case I shall repose trust in your care respecting the correction of the press; Mr. Gisborne will revise it; he heard it recited, and will therefore more readily seize any error." This confidence in the accuracy of Gisborne's verbal memory is touching! From a letter to Gisborne on May 26 following it appears that the offer to correct came from him, and that Shelley sent him "two little papers of corrections and additions," which were probably made use of, or the fact would have been made known. In the case of additions this may satisfactorily account for apparent omissions in the Bodleian MS. Gisborne, after all, did not prove fully up to the mark. "It is to be regretted," writes Shelley to Ollier on November 20, "that the errors of the press are so numerous," adding, "I shall send you the list of errata in a day or two." This was probably "the list of errata written by Shelley himself," from which Mrs. Shelley corrected the edition of 1839.'

In placing *Queen Mab* at the head of the *Juvenilia* I have followed the arrangement adopted by Mr. Buxton Forman in his Library Edition of 1876. I have excluded *The Wandering Jew*, having failed to satisfy myself of the sufficiency of the grounds on which, in certain quarters, it is accepted as the work of Shelley. The shorter fragments are printed, as in Professor Dowden's edition of 1890, along with the miscellaneous poems of the years to which they severally belong, under titles which are sometimes borrowed from Mr. Buxton Forman, sometimes of my own choosing. I have added a few brief Editor's Notes, mainly on textual questions, at the end of the book. Of the poverty of my work in this direction I am painfully aware; but in the present edition the ordinary reader will, it is hoped, find an authentic, complete, and accurately printed text, and, if this be so, the principal end and aim of the OXFORD SHELLEY will have been attained.

I desire cordially to acknowledge the courtesy of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whose kind sanction the second part of *The Daemon of the World* appears in this volume. And I would fain express my deep sense of obligation for manifold information and guidance, derived from Mr. Buxton Forman's various editions, reprints and other publications—especially from the monumental Library Edition of 1876. Acknowledgements are also due to the poet's grandson, Charles E. J. Esdaile, Esq., for permission to include the early poems first printed in Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*; and to Mr. C. D. Locock, for leave to make full use of the material contained in his interesting and stimulating volume. To Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., and to Professor Dowden, cordial thanks are hereby tendered for good counsel cheerfully bestowed. To two of the editors of the Shelley Society Reprints, Mr. Thomas J. Wise and Mr. Robert A. Potts—both generously communicative collectors—I am deeply indebted for the gift or loan of scarce volumes, as well as for many kind offices in other ways. Lastly, to the staff of the Oxford University Press my heartiest thanks are owing, for their unremitting care in all that relates to the printing and correcting of the sheets.

THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

December, 1904.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY

TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839

OBSTACLES have long existed to my presenting the public with a perfect edition of Shelley's Poems. These being at last happily removed, I hasten to fulfil an important duty,—that of giving the productions of a sublime genius to the world, with all the correctness possible, and of, at the same time, detailing the history of those productions, as they sprang, living and warm, from his heart and brain. I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life, except inasmuch as the passions which they engendered inspired his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth ; and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others ; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark that the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that, were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary. Whatever faults he had ought to find extenuation among his fellows, since they prove him to be human ; without them, the exalted nature of his soul would have raised him into something divine.

The qualities that struck any one newly introduced to Shelley were,—First, a gentle and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection and helpful sympathy. The other, the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement ; and the fervent eloquence with which he discussed such subjects. His conversation was marked by its happy abundance, and the beautiful language in which he clothed his poetic ideas and philosophical notions. To defecate life of its misery and its evil was the ruling passion of his soul ; he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind ; and thus any new-sprung hope of liberty inspired a joy and an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. Those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this ; and it must be difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around, since they cannot remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years ago, nor the persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from youth the victim of the state of feeling inspired by the reaction of the French Revolution ; and believing firmly in the justice and excellence of his views, it cannot be wondered that a nature as sensitive, as impetuous, and as generous as his, should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate for others the evils of those systems from which he had himself suffered. Many advantages attended his birth ; he spurned them all when balanced with what he considered his duties. He was generous to imprudence, devoted to heroism.

These characteristics breathe throughout his poetry. The struggle for human weal; the resolution firm to martyrdom; the impetuous pursuit, the glad triumph in good; the determination not to despair;—such were the features that marked those of his works which he regarded with most complacency, as sustained by a lofty subject and useful aim.

In addition to these, his poems may be divided into two classes,—the purely imaginative, and those which sprang from the emotions of his heart. Among the former may be classed the *Witch of Atlas*, *Adonais*, and his latest composition, left imperfect, the *Triumph of Life*. In the first of these particularly he gave the reins to his fancy, and luxuriated in every idea as it rose; in all there is that sense of mystery which formed an essential portion of his perception of life—a clinging to the subtler inner spirit, rather than to the outward form—a curious and metaphysical anatomy of human passion and perception.

The second class is, of course, the more popular, as appealing at once to emotions common to us all; some of these rest on the passion of love; others on grief and despondency; others on the sentiments inspired by natural objects. Shelley's conception of love was exalted, absorbing, allied to all that is purest and noblest in our nature, and warmed by earnest passion; such it appears when he gave it a voice in verse. Yet he was usually averse to expressing these feelings, except when highly idealized; and many of his more beautiful effusions he had cast aside unfinished, and they were never seen by me till after I had lost him. Others, as for instance *Rosalind and Helen* and *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, I found among his papers by chance; and with some difficulty urged him to complete them. There are others, such as the *Ode to the Skylark* and *The Cloud*, which, in the opinion of many critics, bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted: listening to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat on the Thames.

No poet was ever warmed by a more genuine and unforced inspiration. His extreme sensibility gave the intensity of passion to his intellectual pursuits; and rendered his mind keenly alive to every perception of outward objects, as well as to his internal sensations. Such a gift is, among the sad vicissitudes of human life, the disappointments we meet, and the galling sense of our own mistakes and errors, fraught with pain; to escape from such, he delivered up his soul to poetry, and felt happy when he sheltered himself, from the influence of human sympathies, in the wildest regions of fancy. His imagination has been termed too brilliant, his thoughts too subtle. He loved to idealize reality; and this is a taste shared by few. We are willing to have our passing whims exalted into passions, for this gratifies our vanity; but few of us understand or sympathize with the endeavour to ally the love of abstract beauty, and adoration of abstract good, the τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλόν of the Socratic philosophers, with our sympathies with our kind. In this, Shelley resembled Plato; both taking more delight in the abstract and the ideal than in the special and tangible.

This did not result from imitation; for it was not till Shelley resided in Italy that he made Plato his study. He then translated his *Symposium* and his *Ion*; and the English language boasts of no more brilliant composition than Plato's Praise of Love translated by Shelley. To return to his own poetry. The luxury of imagination, which sought nothing beyond itself (as a child burdens itself with spring flowers, thinking of no use beyond the enjoyment of gathering them), often showed itself in his verses: they will be only appreciated by minds which have resemblance to his own; and the mystic subtlety of many of his thoughts will share the same fate. The metaphysical strain that characterizes much of what he has written was, indeed, the portion of his works to which, apart from those whose scope was to awaken mankind to aspirations for what he considered the true and good, he was himself particularly attached. There is much, however, that speaks to the many. When he would consent to dismiss these huntings after the obscure (which, entwined with his nature as they were, he did with difficulty), no poet ever expressed in sweeter, more heart-reaching, or more passionate verse, the gentler or more forcible emotions of the soul.

A wise friend once wrote to Shelley: 'You are still very young, and in certain essential respects you do not yet sufficiently perceive that you are so.' It is seldom that the young know what youth is, till they have got beyond its period; and time was not given him to attain this knowledge. It must be remembered that there is the stamp of such inexperience on all he wrote; he had not completed his nine-and-twentieth year when he died. The calm of middle life did not add the seal of the virtues which adorn maturity to those generated by the vehement spirit of youth. Through life also he was a martyr to ill-health, and constant pain wound up his nerves to a pitch of susceptibility that rendered his views of life different from those of a man in the enjoyment of healthy sensations. Perfectly gentle and forbearing in manner, he suffered a good deal of internal irritability, or rather excitement, and his fortitude to bear was almost always on the stretch; and thus, during a short life, he had gone through more experience of sensation than many whose existence is protracted. 'If I die to-morrow,' he said, on the eve of his unanticipated death, 'I have lived to be older than my father.' The weight of thought and feeling burdened him heavily; you read his sufferings in his attenuated frame, while you perceived the mastery he held over them in his animated countenance and brilliant eyes.

He died, and the world showed no outward sign. But his influence over mankind, though slow in growth, is fast augmenting; and, in the ameliorations that have taken place in the political state of his country, we may trace in part the operation of his arduous struggles. His spirit gathers peace in its new state from the sense that, though late, his exertions were not made in vain, and in the progress of the liberty he so fondly loved.

He died, and his place, among those who knew him intimately, has never been filled up. He walked beside them like a spirit of good to comfort and benefit—to enlighten the darkness of life with irradiations of genius, to cheer it with his sympathy and love. Any one, once attached to Shelley, must feel all other affections, however true and fond, as wasted on barren soil in comparison. It is our best consolation to know that such a pure-minded and exalted being was once among us, and now exists where we hope one day to join him;—although the intolerant, in their blindness, poured down anathemas, the Spirit of Good, who can judge the heart, never rejected him.

In the notes appended to the poems I have endeavoured to narrate the origin and history of each. The loss of nearly all letters and papers which refer to his early life renders the execution more imperfect than it would otherwise have been. I have, however, the liveliest recollection of all that was done and said during the period of my knowing him. Every impression is as clear as if stamped yesterday, and I have no apprehension of any mistake in my statements as far as they go. In other respects I am indeed incompetent: but I feel the importance of the task, and regard it as my most sacred duty. I endeavour to fulfil it in a manner he would himself approve; and hope, in this publication, to lay the first stone of a monument due to Shelley's genius, his sufferings, and his virtues:

Se al seguir son tarda,
Forse avverrà che 'l bel nome gentile
Consacrerò con questa stanca penna.

POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839

In revising this new edition, and carefully consulting Shelley's scattered and confused papers, I found a few fragments which had hitherto escaped me, and was enabled to complete a few poems hitherto left unfinished. What at one time escapes the searching eye, dimmed by its own earnestness, becomes clear at a future period. By the aid of a friend, I also present some poems complete and correct which hitherto have been defaced by various mistakes and omissions. It was suggested that the poem *To the Queen of my Heart* was falsely attributed to Shelley. I certainly find no trace of it among his papers; and, as those of his intimate friends whom I have consulted never heard of it, I omit it.

Two poems are added of some length, *Swellfoot the Tyrant* and *Peter Bell the Third.* I have mentioned the circumstances under which they were written in the notes; and need only add that they are conceived in a very different spirit from Shelley's usual compositions. They are specimens of the burlesque and fanciful; but, although they adopt a familiar style and homely imagery, there shine through the radiance of the poet's imagination the earnest views and opinions of the politician and the moralist.

At my request the publisher has restored the omitted passages of *Queen Mab.* I now present this edition as a complete collection of my husband's poetical works, and I do not foresee that I can hereafter add to or take away a word or line.

Putney, *November* 6, 1839.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY

TO THE VOLUME OF POSTHUMOUS POEMS

PUBLISHED IN 1824

In nobil sangue vita umile e queta,
Ed in alto intelletto un puro core;
Frutto senile in sul giovenil fiore,
E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta.—Petrarca.

It had been my wish, on presenting the public with the Posthumous Poems of Mr. Shelley, to have accompanied them by a biographical notice; as it appeared to me that at this moment a narration of the events of my husband's life would come more gracefully from other hands than mine, I applied to Mr. Leigh Hunt. The distinguished friendship that Mr. Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which Mr. Leigh Hunt clings to his friend's memory, seemed to point him out as the person best calculated for such an undertaking. His absence from this country, which prevented our mutual explanation, has unfortunately rendered my scheme abortive. I do not doubt but that on some other occasion he will pay this tribute to his lost friend, and sincerely regret that the volume which I edit has not been honoured by its insertion.

The comparative solitude in which Mr. Shelley lived was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel his loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle, is gone for ever! He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him. To see him was to love him: and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.

His life was spent in the contemplation of Nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness and affection. He was an elegant scholar and a profound metaphysician; without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations on natural objects; he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth; he could interpret without a fault each appearance in the sky; and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading-room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake, and the waterfall. Ill health and continual pain preyed upon his powers; and the solitude in which we lived, particularly on our first arrival in Italy, although congenial to his feelings, must frequently have weighed upon his spirits; those beautiful and affecting *Lines written in Dejection near Naples* were composed at such an interval; but, when in health, his spirits were buoyant and youthful to an extraordinary degree.

Such was his love for Nature that every page of his poetry is associated, in the minds of his friends, with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. *Prometheus Unbound* was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome; and, when he made his home under the Pisan hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed the *Witch of Atlas*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*. In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezzia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote the *Triumph of Life*, the last of his productions. The beauty but strangeness of this lonely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render this period of his life one of continued enjoyment. I am convinced that the two months we passed there were the happiest which he had ever known: his health even rapidly improved, and he was never better than when I last saw him, full of spirits and joy, embark for Leghorn, that he might there welcome Leigh Hunt to Italy. I was to have accompanied him; but illness confined me to my room, and thus put the seal on my misfortune. His vessel bore out of sight with a favourable wind, and I remained awaiting his return by the breakers of that sea which was about to engulf him.

He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices toward his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn:—but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of those moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever portrayed; our seclusion, the savage nature of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to imbue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known,—a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament, and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost,—not, I fondly hope, for ever; his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, although in an altered form.

Rome received his ashes ; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and 'the world's sole monument' is enriched by his remains.

I must add a few words concerning the contents of this volume. *Julian and Maddalo*, the *Witch of Atlas*, and most of the *Translations*, were written some years ago ; and, with the exception of the *Cyclops*, and the Scenes from the *Magico Prodigioso*, may be considered as having received the author's ultimate corrections. The *Triumph of Life* was his last work, and was left in so unfinished a state that I arranged it in its present form with great difficulty. All his poems which were scattered in periodical works are collected in this volume, and I have added a reprint of *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*: the difficulty with which a copy can be obtained is the cause of its republication. Many of the Miscellaneous Poems, written on the spur of the occasion, and never retouched, I found among his manuscript books, and have carefully copied. I have subjoined, whenever I have been able, the date of their composition.

I do not know whether the critics will reprehend the insertion of some of the most imperfect among them ; but I frankly own that I have been more actuated by the fear lest any monument of his genius should escape me than the wish of presenting nothing but what was complete to the fastidious reader. I feel secure that the lovers of Shelley's poetry (who know how, more than any poet of the present day, every line and word he wrote is instinct with peculiar beauty) will pardon and thank me : I consecrate this volume to them.

The size of this collection has prevented the insertion of any prose pieces. They will hereafter appear in a separate publication.

MARY W. SHELLEY.

LONDON, *June* 1, 1824.

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THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD

A FRAGMENT

PART I

[Sections i and ii of *Queen Mab* rehandled, and published by Shelley in the *Alastor* volume, 1816. See *Bibliographical List*, and the Editor's *Introductory Note* to *Queen Mab*.]

> Nec tantum prodere vati,
> Quantum scire licet. Venit aetas omnis in unam
> Congeriem, miserumque premunt tot saecula pectus.
> LUCAN, *Phars.* v. 176.

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!
One pale as yonder wan and hornèd moon,
With lips of lurid blue,
The other glowing like the vital morn,
When throned on ocean's wave
It breathes over the world:
Yet both so passing strange and wonderful!

Hath then the iron-sceptred Skeleton,
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres,
To the hell dogs that couch beneath his throne
Cast that fair prey? Must that divinest form,
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, whose azure veins
Steal like dark streams along a field of snow,
Whose outline is as fair as marble clothed
In light of some sublimest mind, decay?
Nor putrefaction's breath
Leave aught of this pure spectacle
But loathsomeness and ruin?—
Spare aught but a dark theme,
On which the lightest heart might moralize?
Or is it but that downy-wingèd slumbers
Have charmed their nurse coy Silence near her lids
To watch their own repose?
Will they, when morning's beam
Flows through those wells of light,
Seek far from noise and day some western cave,
Where woods and streams with soft and pausing winds
A lulling murmur weave?—
Ianthe doth not sleep
The dreamless sleep of death:
Nor in her moonlight chamber silently

Doth Henry hear her regular pulses throb,
Or mark her delicate cheek
With interchange of hues mock the broad moon,
Outwatching weary night,
Without assured reward.
Her dewy eyes are closed;
On their translucent lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs that burn below
With unapparent fire,
The baby Sleep is pillowed:
Her golden tresses shade
The bosom's stainless pride,
Twining like tendrils of the parasite
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
'Tis like a wondrous strain that sweeps
Around a lonely ruin
When west winds sigh and evening waves respond
In whispers from the shore:
'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
Which from the unseen lyres of dells and groves
The genii of the breezes sweep.
Floating on waves of music and of light,
The chariot of the Daemon of the World
Descends in silent power:
Its shape reposed within: slight as some cloud
That catches but the palest tinge of day
When evening yields to night,
Bright as that fibrous woof when stars indue
Its transitory robe.
Four shapeless shadows bright and beautiful
Draw that strange car of glory, reins of light
Check their unearthly speed; they stop and fold
Their wings of braided air:
The Daemon leaning from the ethereal car
Gazed on the slumbering maid.
Human eye hath ne'er beheld
A shape so wild, so bright, so beautiful,
As that which o'er the maiden's charmèd sleep
Waving a starry wand,
Hung like a mist of light.
Such sounds as breathed around like odorous winds
Of wakening spring arose,
Filling the chamber and the moonlight sky.
Maiden, the world's supremest spirit
Beneath the shadow of her wings
Folds all thy memory doth inherit
From ruin of divinest things,
Feelings that lure thee to betray,
And light of thoughts that pass away.

For thou hast earned a mighty boon,
The truths which wisest poets see
Dimly, thy mind may make its own,
Rewarding its own majesty,
Entranced in some diviner mood
Of self-oblivious solitude.

Custom, and Faith, and Power thou spurnest;
From hate and awe thy heart is free;
Ardent and pure as day thou burnest,
For dark and cold mortality
A living light, to cheer it long,
The watch-fires of the world among.

Therefore from nature's inner shrine,
Where gods and fiends in worship bend,
Majestic spirit, be it thine
The flame to seize, the veil to rend,
Where the vast snake Eternity
In charmèd sleep doth ever lie.

All that inspires thy voice of love,
Or speaks in thy unclosing eyes,
Or through thy frame doth burn or move,
Or think or feel, awake, arise!
Spirit, leave for mine and me
Earth's unsubstantial mimicry!

It ceased, and from the mute and moveless frame
A radiant spirit arose,
All beautiful in naked purity.
Robed in its human hues it did ascend,
Disparting as it went the silver clouds,
It moved towards the car, and took its seat
Beside the Daemon shape.

Obedient to the sweep of aëry song,
The mighty ministers
Unfurled their prismy wings.
The magic car moved on;
The night was fair, innumerable stars
Studded heaven's dark blue vault;
The eastern wave grew pale
With the first smile of morn.
The magic car moved on.
From the swift sweep of wings
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew;
And where the burning wheels
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak
Was traced a line of lightning.
Now far above a rock the utmost verge
Of the wide earth it flew,
The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow
Frowned o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's stormy path,
Calm as a slumbering babe,
Tremendous ocean lay.
Its broad and silent mirror gave to view
The pale and waning stars,
The chariot's fiery track,
And the grey light of morn
Tingeing those fleecy clouds
That cradled in their folds the infant dawn.
The chariot seemed to fly
Through the abyss of an immense concave,
Radiant with million constellations, tinged
With shades of infinite colour,
And semicircled with a belt
Flashing incessant meteors.

As they approached their goal,
The wingèd shadows seemed to gather speed.
The sea no longer was distinguished; earth
Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere, suspended
In the black concave of heaven
With the sun's cloudless orb,
Whose rays of rapid light
Parted around the chariot's swifter course,
And fell like ocean's feathery spray
Dashed from the boiling surge
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
Earth's distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkles in the heavens,
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems widely rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever varying glory.
It was a sight of wonder! Some were horned,
And like the moon's argentine crescent hung
In the dark dome of heaven; some did shed
A clear mild beam like Hesperus, while the sea
Yet glows with fading sunlight; others dashed
Athwart the night with trains of bickering fire,
Like spherèd worlds to death and ruin driven;
Some shone like stars, and as the chariot passed
Bedimmed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose involved immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the lightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze

Is less instinct with thee,—
Yet not the meanest worm,
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead,
Less shares thy eternal breath.
Spirit of Nature! thou
Imperishable as this glorious scene,
Here is thy fitting temple.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
To the shore of the immeasurable sea,
And thou hast lingered there
Until the sun's broad orb
Seemed resting on the fiery line of ocean,
Thou must have marked the braided webs of gold
That without motion hang
Over the sinking sphere:
Thou must have marked the billowy mountain clouds,
Edged with intolerable radiancy,
Towering like rocks of jet
Above the burning deep:
And yet there is a moment
When the sun's highest point
Peers like a star o'er ocean's western edge,
When those far clouds of feathery purple gleam
Like fairy lands girt by some heavenly sea:
Then has thy rapt imagination soared
Where in the midst of all existing things
The temple of the mightiest Daemon stands.

Yet not the golden islands
That gleam amid yon flood of purple light,
Nor the feathery curtains
That canopy the sun's resplendent couch,
Nor the burnished ocean waves
Paving that gorgeous dome,
So fair, so wonderful a sight
As the eternal temple could afford.
The elements of all that human thought
Can frame of lovely or sublime, did join
To rear the fabric of the fane, nor aught
Of earth may image forth its majesty.
Yet likest evening's vault that faëry hall,
As heaven low resting on the wave it spread
Its floors of flashing light,
Its vast and azure dome;
And on the verge of that obscure abyss
Where crystal battlements o'erhang the gulf
Of the dark world, ten thousand spheres diffuse
Their lustre through its adamantine gates.

The magic car no longer moved;
The Daemon and the Spirit

Entered the eternal gates.
Those clouds of aëry gold
That slept in glittering billows
Beneath the azure canopy,
With the ethereal footsteps trembled not;
While slight and odorous mists
Floated to strains of thrilling melody
Through the vast columns and the pearly shrines.

The Daemon and the Spirit
Approached the overhanging battlement,
Below lay stretched the boundless universe!
There, far as the remotest line
That limits swift imagination's flight,
Unending orbs mingled in mazy motion,
Immutably fulfilling
Eternal Nature's law.
Above, below, around,
The circling systems formed
A wilderness of harmony,
Each with undeviating aim
In eloquent silence through the depths of space
Pursued its wondrous way.—

Awhile the Spirit paused in ecstasy.
Yet soon she saw, as the vast spheres swept by,
Strange things within their belted orbs appear.
Like animated frenzies, dimly moved
Shadows, and skeletons, and fiendly shapes,
Thronging round human graves, and o'er the dead
Sculpturing records for each memory
In verse, such as malignant gods pronounce,
Blasting the hopes of men, when heaven and hell
Confounded burst in ruin o'er the world:
And they did build vast trophies, instruments
Of murder, human bones, barbaric gold,
Skins torn from living men, and towers of skulls
With sightless holes gazing on blinder heaven,
Mitres, and crowns, and brazen chariots stained
With blood, and scrolls of mystic wickedness,
The sanguine codes of venerable crime.
The likeness of a thronèd king came by,
When these had passed, bearing upon his brow
A threefold crown; his countenance was calm,
His eye severe and cold; but his right hand
Was charged with bloody coin, and he did gnaw
By fits, with secret smiles, a human heart
Concealed beneath his robe; and motley shapes,
A multitudinous throng, around him knelt,
With bosoms bare, and bowed heads, and false looks
Of true submission, as the sphere rolled by,
Brooking no eye to witness their foul shame,

Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues
Tremble to speak, they did rage horribly,
Breathing in self-contempt fierce blasphemies
Against the Daemon of the World, and high
Hurling their armèd hands where the pure Spirit,
Serene and inaccessibly secure,
Stood on an isolated pinnacle,
The flood of ages combating below,
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around
Necessity's unchanging harmony.

PART II

[Sections viii and ix of *Queen Mab* rehandled by Shelley. First printed in 1876 by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whose kind permission it is here reproduced. See Editor's *Introductory Note* to *Queen Mab*.]

O HAPPY Earth! reality of Heaven!
To which those restless powers that ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe aspire;
Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!
Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
Verge to one point and blend for ever there:
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,
Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined
Those rooted hopes, that the proud Power of Evil
Shall not for ever on this fairest world
Shake pestilence and war, or that his slaves
With blasphemy for prayer, and human blood
For sacrifice, before his shrine for ever
In adoration bend, or Erebus
With all its banded fiends shall not uprise
To overwhelm in envy and revenge
The dauntless and the good, who dare to hurl
Defiance at his throne, girt tho' it be
With Death's omnipotence. Thou hast beheld
His empire, o'er the present and the past;
It was a desolate sight—now gaze on mine,
Futurity. Thou hoary giant Time,
Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,—
And from the cradles of eternity,
Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep

By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,
Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold
Thy glorious destiny!

The Spirit saw
The vast frame of the renovated world
Smile in the lap of Chaos, and the sense
Of hope thro' her fine texture did suffuse
Such varying glow, as summer evening casts
On undulating clouds and deepening lakes.
Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea
And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits,
Was the sweet stream of thought that with wild motion
Flowed o'er the Spirit's human sympathies.
The mighty tide of thought had paused awhile,
Which from the Daemon now like Ocean's stream
Again began to pour.—

To me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep—
Space, matter, time and mind—let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.
All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck
To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
Rewarding her with their pure perfectness:
The balmy breathings of the wind inhale
Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad:
Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere,
Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream;
No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,
Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride
The foliage of the undecaying trees;
But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,
And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring,
Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

The habitable earth is full of bliss;
Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate nor live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet

To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves
And melodise with man's blest nature there.

The vast tract of the parched and sandy waste
Now teems with countless rills and shady woods,
Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages;
And where the startled wilderness did hear
A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,
Hymning his victory, or the milder snake
Crushing the bones of some frail antelope
Within his brazen folds—the dewy lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles
To see a babe before his mother's door,
Share with the green and golden basilisk
That comes to lick his feet, his morning's meal.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail
Has seen, above the illimitable plain,
Morning on night and night on morning rise,
Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread
Its shadowy mountains on the sunbright sea,
Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves
So long have mingled with the gusty wind
In melancholy loneliness, and swept
The desert of those ocean solitudes,
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,
The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,
Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds
Of kindliest human impulses respond:
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,
With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,
And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,
Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,
Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore,
To meet the kisses of the flowerets there.

Man chief perceives the change, his being notes
The gradual renovation, and defines
Each movement of its progress on his mind.
Man, where the gloom of the long polar night
Lowered o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,
Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost
Basked in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,
Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night;
Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day
With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,
Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed
Unnatural vegetation, where the land
Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease,
Was man a nobler being; slavery
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust.

Even where the milder zone afforded man
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,
Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth availed
Till late to arrest its progress, or create
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved
Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime:
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,
The mimic of surrounding misery,
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires.
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,
Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Dawns on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness gift
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks
The unprevailing hoariness of age,
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands
Immortal upon earth: no longer now
He slays the beast that sports around his dwelling
And horribly devours its mangled flesh,
Or drinks its vital blood, which like a stream
Of poison thro' his fevered veins did flow
Feeding a plague that secretly consumed
His feeble frame, and kindling in his mind
Hatred, despair, and fear and vain belief,
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.
No longer now the wingèd habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
All things are void of terror: man has lost
His desolating privilege, and stands
An equal amidst equals: happiness
And science dawn though late upon the earth;
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
Reason and passion cease to combat there;
Whilst mind unfettered o'er the earth extends
Its all-subduing energies, and wields
The sceptre of a vast dominion there.

Mild is the slow necessity of death:

The tranquil spirit fails beneath its grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Resigned in peace to the necessity,
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
And full of wonder, full of hope as he.
The deadly germs of languor and disease
Waste in the human frame, and Nature gifts
With choicest boons her human worshippers.
How vigorous now the athletic form of age!
How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, or care,
Had stamped the seal of grey deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
How sweet the smiles of taintless infancy.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,
Fearless and free the ruddy children play,
Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows
With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;
The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,
There rust amid the accumulated ruins
Now mingling slowly with their native earth:
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once
Lighted the cheek of lean captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, now freely shines
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair
Peals through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds
And merriment are resonant around.

The fanes of Fear and Falsehood hear no more
The voice that once waked multitudes to war
Thundering thro' all their aisles: but now respond
To the death dirge of the melancholy wind:
It were a sight of awfulness to see
The works of faith and slavery, so vast,
So sumptuous, yet withal so perishing!
Even as the corpse that rests beneath their wall.
A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death
To-day, the breathing marble glows above
To decorate its memory, and tongues
Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms
In silence and in darkness seize their prey.
These ruins soon leave not a wreck behind:
Their elements, wide-scattered o'er the globe,
To happier shapes are moulded, and become
Ministrant to all blissful impulses:
Thus human things are perfected, and earth,

Even as a child beneath its mother's love,
Is strengthened in all excellence, and grows
Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past
Fades from our charmèd sight. My task is done:
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,
With all the fear and all the hope they bring.
My spells are past: the present now recurs.
Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change:
For birth and life and death, and that strange state
Before the naked powers that thro' the world
Wander like winds have found a human home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:
For birth but wakes the universal mind
Whose mighty streams might else in silence flow
Thro' the vast world, to individual sense
Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape
New modes of passion to its frame may lend;
Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there
That variegate the eternal universe;
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies
And happy regions of eternal hope.
Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on:
Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
To feed with kindliest dews its favourite flower,
That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,
Lighting the green wood with its sunny smile.

Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,
So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch flares;
'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,
The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep.
For what thou art shall perish utterly,
But what is thine may never cease to be;
Death is no foe to virtue: earth has seen
Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,
Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,

And presaging the truth of visioned bliss.
Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene
Of linked and gradual being has confirmed?
Hopes that not vainly thou, and living fires
Of mind as radiant and as pure as thou,
Have shone upon the paths of men—return,
Surpassing Spirit, to that world, where thou
Art destined an eternal war to wage
With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot
The germs of misery from the human heart.
Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease:
Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
When fenced by power and master of the world.
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind,
Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,
Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.
Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,
And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
Which thou hast now received: virtue shall keep
Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,
And many days of beaming hope shall bless
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture from thy smile.

The Daemon called its wingèd ministers.
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car,
That rolled beside the crystal battlement,
Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.
The burning wheels inflame
The steep descent of Heaven's untrodden way.
Fast and far the chariot flew:
The mighty globes that rolled
Around the gate of the Eternal Fane
Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs
That ministering on the solar power
With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.
Earth floated then below:
The chariot paused a moment;
The Spirit then descended:
And from the earth departing
The shadows with swift wings
Speeded like thought upon the light of Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then,
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:

Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained:
She looked around in wonder and beheld
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch, 620
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,
And the bright beaming stars
That through the casement shone.

ALASTOR

OR

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

[Composed at Bishopsgate Heath, near Windsor Park, 1815 (autumn); published, as the title-piece of a slender volume containing other poems (see *Bibliographical List*, by Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, London, 1816 (March). Reprinted—the first edition being sold out—amongst the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Sources of the text are (1) the *editio princeps*, 1816; (2) *Posth. Poems*, 1824; (3) *Poetical Works*, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd. For (2) and (3) Mrs. Shelley is responsible.]

PREFACE

The poem entitled *Alastor* may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

> 'The good die first,
> And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust,
> Burn to the socket!'

December 14, 1815.

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare.—*Confess. St. August.*

Earth, ocean, air, belovèd brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs;
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive
This boast, belovèd brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favour now!

  Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched

Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
And my heart ever gazes on the depth
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,
Like an inspired and desperate alchymist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange tears
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
Such magic as compels the charmèd night
To render up thy charge: . . . and, though ne'er yet
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought,
Has shone within me, that serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
May modulate with murmurs of the air,
And motions of the forests and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence reared,
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:—
A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:—
Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn bard
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude.
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,

Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had passed, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
The red volcano overcanopies
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes
On black bare pointed islets ever beat
With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
And the green earth lost in his heart its claims
To love and wonder; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.
His wandering step
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,
Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble daemons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men

Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
From duties and repose to tend his steps:—
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love:—and watched his nightly sleep,
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
Of innocent dreams arose: then, when red morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet wandering on, through Arabie
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the aërial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way;
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veilèd maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
A permeating fire: wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
Subdued by its own pathos: her fair hands
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.

The beating of her heart was heard to fill
The pauses of her music, and her breath
Tumultuously accorded with those fits
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
As if her heart impatiently endured
Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turned,
And saw by the warm light of their own life
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.
His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom: . . . she drew back a while,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock he started from his trance—
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
The spirit of sweet human love has sent
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
He overleaps the bounds. Alas! Alas!
Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined
Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,
In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,
Lead only to a black and watery depth,
While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung,
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,

Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart,
The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung
His brain even like despair.
While daylight held
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
With his still soul. At night the passion came,
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
Into the darkness.—As an eagle grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
O'er the wide aëry wilderness: thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
Startling with careless step the moonlight snake,
He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
Day after day a weary waste of hours,
Bearing within his life the brooding care
That ever fed on its decaying flame.
And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone
As in a furnace burning secretly
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who ministered with human charity
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In its career: the infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream
Of after-times; but youthful maidens, taught
By nature, would interpret half the woe

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219 Conduct *ed. 1816. See notes at end.*

That wasted him, would call him with false names
Brother, and friend, would press his pallid hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approached, and with strong wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight.—'Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts?' A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny, sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.
Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on,
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafèd sea.
The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.
Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
With dark obliterating course, he sate:
As if their genii were the ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those belovèd eyes, the Poet sate
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on,
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day;
Night followed, clad with stars. On every side
More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean: safely fled—
As if that frail and wasted human form,
Had been an elemental god.
At midnight
The moon arose: and lo! the ethereal cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves
Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save?—
The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,—
The crags closed round with black and jaggèd arms,
The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
The little boat was driven. A cavern there
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths
Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on

With unrelaxing speed.—‘Vision and Love!’
The Poet cried aloud, ‘I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long!’

The boat pursued
The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone
At length upon that gloomy river's flow;
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarlèd roots
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,
Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides
Is left, the boat paused shuddering.—Shall it sink
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress
Of that resistless gulf embosom it?
Now shall it fall?—A wandering stream of wind,
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,
Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark!
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar,
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.
Where the embowering trees recede, and leave
A little space of green expanse, the cove
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers
For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,
Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
But on his heart its solitude returned,

And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame
Had yet performed its ministry: it hung
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
Of night close over it.
                                        The noonday sun
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
Scooped in the dark base of their aëry rocks
Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever.
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,
Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching, frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia floating hang
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The grey trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,
With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves
Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,
A soul-dissolving odour, to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like vaporous shapes half seen; beyond, a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,

Or, painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected lines
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
An unaccustomed presence, and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed
To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes
Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—
But, undulating woods, and silent well,
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was,—only . . . when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness, . . . two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him.

Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
The windings of the dell.—The rivulet
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony
Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones
It danced; like childhood laughing as it went:
Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept,
Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness.—'O stream!
Whose source is inaccessibly profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,
Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course
Have each their type in me: and the wide sky,
And measureless ocean may declare as soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud
Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched

Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
I' the passing wind!'

Beside the grassy shore
Of the small stream he went; he did impress
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch
Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him,
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he went
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
The struggling brook: tall spires of windlestrae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs:—so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued
The stream, that with a larger volume now
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and, its precipice
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems, with its accumulated crags,
To overhang the world: for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,

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530 roots *ed. 1816* : *query* stumps *or* trunks. *See note at end.*

Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
Yielding one only response, at each pause
In most familiar cadence, with the howl
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
Fell into that immeasurable void
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

Yet the grey precipice and solemn pine
And torrent, were not all;—one silent nook
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
It overlooked in its serenity
The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars
It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile
Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,
And did embower with leaves for ever green,
And berries dark, the smooth and even space
Of its inviolated floor, and here
The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,
In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,
Red, yellow, or ethereally pale,
Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt
Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach
The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,
One human step alone, has ever broken
The stillness of its solitude:—one voice
Alone inspired its echoes;—even that voice
Which hither came, floating among the winds,
And led the loveliest among human forms
To make their wild haunts the depository
Of all the grace and beauty that endued
Its motions, render up its majesty,
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,
Commit the colours of that varying cheek,
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank
Wan moonlight even to fulness: not a star
Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O, storm of death!

Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night:
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,
Art king of this frail world, from the red field
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls
His brother Death. A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the world;
Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest,
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear
Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,
And his own being unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
To mingle. Now upon the jaggèd hills
It rests, and still as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still:
And when two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained

Utterly black, the murky shades involved
An image, silent, cold, and motionless,
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—
No sense, no motion, no divinity—
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
Once fed with many-voicèd waves—a dream
Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever,
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.
O, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O, that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
Which but one living man has drained, who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
No proud exemption in the blighting curse
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,
Lone as incarnate death! O, that the dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled
Like some frail exhalation; which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled!
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
The child of grace and genius. Heartless things
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms
And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth
From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
In vesper low or joyous orison,
Lifts still its solemn voice:—but thou art fled—
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes
That image sleep in death, upon that form
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
Let not high verse, mourning the memory
Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,

And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
It is a woe too 'deep for tears,' when all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

NOTE ON ALASTOR, BY MRS. SHELLEY

Alastor is written in a very different tone from *Queen Mab*. In the latter, Shelley poured out all the cherished speculations of his youth—all the irrepressible emotions of sympathy, censure, and hope, to which the present suffering, and what he considers the proper destiny, of his fellow-creatures, gave birth. *Alastor*, on the contrary, contains an individual interest only. A very few years, with their attendant events, had checked the ardour of Shelley's hopes, though he still thought them well grounded, and that to advance their fulfilment was the noblest task man could achieve.

This is neither the time nor place to speak of the misfortunes that chequered his life. It will be sufficient to say that, in all he did, he at the time of doing it believed himself justified to his own conscience; while the various ills of poverty and loss of friends brought home to him the sad realities of life. Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward; inclining him rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul than to glance abroad, and to make, as in *Queen Mab*, the whole universe the object and subject of his song. In the Spring of 1815 an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption; abscesses were formed on his lungs, and he suffered acute spasms. Suddenly a complete change took place; and, though through life he was a martyr to pain and debility, every symptom of pulmonary disease vanished. His nerves, which nature had formed sensitive to an unexampled degree, were rendered still more susceptible by the state of his health.

As soon as the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent, he went abroad. He visited some of the more magnificent scenes of Switzerland, and returned to England from Lucerne, by the Reuss and the Rhine. The river-navigation enchanted him. In his favourite poem of *Thalaba*, his imagination had been excited by a description of such a voyage. In the summer of 1815, after a tour along the southern coast of Devonshire and a visit to Clifton, he rented a house on Bishopgate Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness. The later summer months were warm and dry. Accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the Thames, making a voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Cricklade. His beautiful stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade were written on that occasion. *Alastor* was composed on his return. He spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park; and the magnificent woodland was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest-scenery we find in the poem.

None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude—the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspires with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts—give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS

Ὅσαις δὲ βροτὸν ἔθνος ἀγλαίαις ἁπτόμεσθα
περαίνει πρὸς ἔσχατον
πλόον· ναυσὶ δ᾽ οὔτε πεζὸς ἰὼν ἂν εὕροις
ἐς Ὑπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυματὰν ὁδόν.
Πινδ. Πυθ. x.

[Composed in the neighbourhood of Bisham Wood, near Great Marlow, Bucks, 1817 (April—Sept. 23); printed, with title (dated 1818), *Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century*, Oct., Nov., 1817, but suppressed, pending revision, by the publishers, C. & J. Ollier. (A few copies had got out, but these were recalled, and some recovered.) Published, with a fresh title-page and twenty-seven cancel-leaves, as *The Revolt of Islam*, Jan. 10, 1818. Sources of the text are (1) *Laon and Cythna*, 1818; (2) *The Revolt of Islam*, 1818; (3) *Poetical Works*, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd—both edited by Mrs. Shelley. A copy, with several pages missing, of the *Preface*, the *Dedication*, and *Canto* I of *Laon and Cythna* is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. For a full collation of this MS. see Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination of the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903. Two MS. fragments from the Hunt papers are also extant: one (twenty-four lines) in the possession of Mr. W. M. Rossetti, another (IX. xxiii. 9—xxix. 6) in that of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. See *The Shelley Library*, pp. 83–86, for an account of the copy of *Laon* upon which Shelley worked in revising for publication.]

PREFACE

The Poem which I now present to the world is an attempt from which I scarcely dare to expect success, and in which a writer of established fame might fail without disgrace. It is an experiment on the temper of the public mind, as to how far a thirst for a happier condition of moral and political society survives, among the enlightened and refined, the tempests which have shaken the age in which we live. I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the ethereal combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a Poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality; and in the view of kindling within the bosoms of my readers a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence nor misrepresentation nor prejudice can ever totally extinguish among mankind.

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind, by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings, so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore (with the exception of the first canto, which is purely introductory) is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at 'all the oppressions which are done under the sun'; its tendency to awaken public hope, and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World, and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism,—civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error, and the eternity of genius and virtue. Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And, if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong such as belongs to no meaner desires, let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings in the vivid presence of which within his own mind consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

The panic which, like an epidemic transport, seized upon all classes of men during the excesses consequent upon the French Revolution, is gradually giving place to sanity. It has ceased to be believed that whole generations of mankind ought to consign themselves to a hopeless inheritance of ignorance and misery, because a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves for centuries were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen so soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened. That their conduct could not have been marked by any other characters than ferocity and thoughtlessness is the historical fact from which liberty derives all its recommendations, and falsehood the worst features of its deformity. There is a reflux in the tide of human things which bears the shipwrecked hopes of men into a secure haven after the storms are past. Methinks, those who now live have survived an age of despair.

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilised mankind produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected as it was impossible to realise. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues, and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France, was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilised world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state according to the provisions of which one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But, on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleaped the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus, many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows. Metaphysics[1], and inquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those[2] of Mr. Malthus, calculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

I do not presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character; designing that, even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words to divert the attention of the reader, from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities. No education, indeed, can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change, amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war; cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me, like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense; and have read the Poets and the Historians and the Metaphysicians[1] whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth, as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer do not in themselves constitute men Poets, but only prepares them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which, with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

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[1] I ought to except Sir W. Drummond's *Academical Questions*; a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism.

[2] It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the *Essay on Population* to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of *Political Justice*.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Spenser, the dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon[2]; the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded; — all resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakespeare than Shakespeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.

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[1] In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science.

[2] Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined.

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful), not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity; you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed also by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure. Yet there will be found some instances where I have completely failed in this attempt; and one, which I here request the reader to consider as an erratum, where there is left, most inadvertently, an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza.

But in this as in every other respect I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together. Longinus could not have been the contemporary of Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own: it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded, the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton, wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract, from the midst of insult and contempt and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality; and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that defeat, which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may *not* be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the basis of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It was at the period when Greece was led captive, and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigoted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under the name of freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great. These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which, arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his footsteps would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

The Poem now presented to the Public occupied little more than six months in the composition. That period has been devoted to the task with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm. I have exercised a watchful and earnest criticism on my work as it grew under my hands. I would willingly have sent it forth to the world with that perfection which long labour and revision is said to bestow. But I found that, if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed fresh from my mind. And, although the mere composition occupied no more than six months, the thoughts thus arranged were slowly gathered in as many years.

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself. The belief which some superstitious persons whom I have brought upon the stage entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world.

DEDICATION

> There is no danger to a man, that knows
> What life and death is: there's not any law
> Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
> That he should stoop to any other law.—CHAPMAN.

TO MARY —— ——

I

So now my summer task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;
Nor thou disdain, that ere my fame become
A star among the stars of mortal night,
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
With thy belovèd name, thou Child of love and light.

II

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour,
Is ended,—and the fruit is at thy feet!
No longer where the woods to frame a bower
With interlacèd branches mix and meet,
Or where with sound like many voices sweet,
Waterfalls leap among wild islands green,
Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat
Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen:
But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

III

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.
I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirit's sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was,
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why; until there rose
From the near schoolroom, voices, that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

IV

And then I clasped my hands and looked around—
—But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—
So, without shame, I spake:—'I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach or check.' I then controlled
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

V

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn, but from that secret store
Wrought linkèd armour for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among mankind;
Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
Within me, till there came upon my mind
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

VI

Alas, that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one!—
Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world in which I moved alone:—
Yet never found I one not false to me,
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone
Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
Aught but a lifeless clod, until revived by thee.

VII

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart
Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless plain;
How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds among,
Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long!

VIII

No more alone through the world's wilderness,
Although I trod the paths of high intent,
I journeyed now: no more companionless,
Where solitude is like despair, I went.—
There is the wisdom of a stern content
When Poverty can blight the just and good,
When Infamy dares mock the innocent,
And cherished friends turn with the multitude
To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

IX

Now has descended a serener hour,
And with inconstant fortune, friends return;
Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power
Which says:—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.
And from thy side two gentle babes are born

54 clog *ed. 1818.* See notes at end.

To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn;
And these delights, and thou, have been to me
The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

X

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?
Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,
Though it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,
And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway
Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain
Reply in hope—but I am worn away,
And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey.

XI

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:
Time may interpret to his silent years.
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:
And through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

XII

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
I wonder not—for One then left this earth
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
Of its departing glory; still her fame
Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild
Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

XIII

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,
Which was the echo of three thousand years;
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,
As some lone man who in a desert hears
The music of his home:—unwonted fears
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,
And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space
Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

XIV

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind!
If there must be no response to my cry—
If men must rise and stamp with fury blind
On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,
Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity

Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,
That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.

CANTO I

I

When the last hope of trampled France had failed
Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled
The peak of an aëreal promontory,
Whose caverned base with the vexed surge was hoary;
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken
Each cloud, and every wave:—but transitory
The calm: for sudden, the firm earth was shaken,
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

II

So as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,
When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,
Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,
Until their complicating lines did steep
The orient sun in shadow:—not a sound
Was heard; one horrible repose did keep
The forests and the floods, and all around
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

III

Hark! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps
Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps
Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on,
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,
Lightning, and hail, and darkness eddying by.
There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone
Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

IV

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven
That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen
Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven
Most delicately, and the ocean green,
Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,
Quivered like burning emerald: calm was spread
On all below; but far on high, between
Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,
Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed.

V

For ever, as the war became more fierce
  Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,
That spot grew more serene; blue light did pierce
  The woof of those white clouds, which seem to lie
  Far, deep, and motionless; while through the sky
The pallid semicircle of the moon
  Passed on, in slow and moving majesty;
Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon
But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

VI

I could not choose but gaze; a fascination
  Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew
My fancy thither, and in expectation
  Of what I knew not, I remained:—the hue
  Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,
Suddenly stained with shadow did appear;
  A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,
Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere
Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

VII

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,
  Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river
Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,
  Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth quiver,
  Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour;
So, from that chasm of light a wingèd Form
  On all the winds of heaven approaching ever
Floated, dilating as it came: the storm
Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

VIII

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
  Suspending thought and breath; a monstrous sight!
For in the air do I behold indeed
  An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—
  And now relaxing its impetuous flight,
Before the aëreal rock on which I stood,
  The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

IX

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,
  And every golden feather gleamed therein—
Feather and scale, inextricably blended.
  The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin
  Shone through the plumes its coils were twined within

By many a swoln and knotted fold, and high
And far, the neck, receding lithe and thin,
Sustained a crested head, which warily
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's steadfast eye.

X

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed
Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing
Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,
Drooped through the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,
And casting back its eager head, with beak
And talon unremittingly assailed
The wreathèd Serpent, who did ever seek
Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

XI

What life, what power, was kindled and arose
Within the sphere of that appalling fray!
For, from the encounter of those wondrous foes,
A vapour like the sea's suspended spray
Hung gathered: in the void air, far away,
Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did leap,
Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
Like sparks into the darkness;—as they sweep,
Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

XII

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,
And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;
Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
Locked in stiff rings his adamantine coil,
Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,
Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea
Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil
His adversary, who then reared on high
His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

XIII

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge,
Where they had sunk together, would the Snake
Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge
The wind with his wild writhings; for to break
That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake
The strength of his unconquerable wings
As in despair, and with his sinewy neck,
Dissolve in sudden shock those linkèd rings,
Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

XIV

Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,
Thus long, but unprevailing:—the event
Of that portentous fight appeared at length:

Until the lamp of day was almost spent
It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,
Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last
Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent,
With clang of wings and scream the Eagle passed,
Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

XV

And with it fled the tempest. so that ocean
And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—
Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion
Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere
Of sunset sweep, and their fierce roar to hear
Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound
To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear
And beautiful, and there the sea I found
Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

XVI

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,
Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand
Of the waste sea—fair as one flower adorning
An icy wilderness—each delicate hand
Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band
Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate
Looking upon the waves; on the bare strand
Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,
Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.

XVII

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon
That unimaginable fight, and now
That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,
As brightly it illustrated her woe;
For in the tears which silently to flow
Paused not, its lustre hung: she watching aye
The foam-wreaths which the faint tide wove below
Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,
And after every groan looked up over the sea.

XVIII

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make
His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,
Parted, and quivered; the tears ceased to break
From her immovable eyes; no voice of wail
Escaped her; but she rose, and on the gale
Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair
Poured forth her voice; the caverns of the vale
That opened to the ocean, caught it there,
And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

XIX

She spake in language whose strange melody
Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,
What made its music more melodious be,
The pity and the love of every tone;
But to the Snake those accents sweet were known
His native tongue and hers; nor did he beat
The hoar spray idly then, but winding on
Through the green shadows of the waves that meet
Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

XX

Then on the sands the Woman sate again.
And wept and clasped her hands, and all between,
Renewed the unintelligible strain
Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien;
And she unveiled her bosom, and the green
And glancing shadows of the sea did play
O'er its marmoreal depth:—one moment seen,
For ere the next, the Serpent did obey
Her voice, and, coiled in rest in her embrace it lay.

XXI

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes
Serene yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,
While yet the daylight lingereth in the skies
Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air,
And said: 'To grieve is wise, but the despair
Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep:
This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare
With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,
A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.'

XXII

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,
Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.
I wept. 'Shall this fair woman all alone,
Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go?
His head is on her heart, and who can know
How soon he may devour his feeble prey?'—
Such were my thoughts, when the tide gan to flow;
And that strange boat like the moon's shade did sway
Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay:—

XXIII

A boat of rare device, which had no sail
But its own curvèd prow of thin moonstone,
Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,
To catch those gentlest winds which are not known
To breathe, but by the steady speed alone

With which it cleaves the sparkling sea; and now
We are embarked—the mountains hang and frown
Over the starry deep that gleams below,
A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

XXIV

And as we sailed, a strange and awful tale
That Woman told, like such mysterious dream
As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale!
'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,
Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme
Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent
Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam
Of love divine into my spirit sent,
And ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

XXV

'Speak not to me, but hear! Much shalt thou learn,
Much must remain unthought, and more untold,
In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn:
Know then, that from the depth of ages old,
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold
Ruling the world with a divided lot,
Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,
Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought
Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

XXVI

'The earliest dweller of the world, alone,
Stood on the verge of chaos. Lo! afar
O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,
Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar:
A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star
Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,
All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,
In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood
That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's blood.

XXVII

'Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil,
One Power of many shapes which none may know,
One Shape of many names; the Fiend did revel
In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,
For the new race of man went to and fro,
Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,
And hating good—for his immortal foe,
He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,
To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

XXVIII

'The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things,
Was Evil's breath and life; this made him strong
To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;

And the great Spirit of Good did creep among
The nations of mankind, and every tongue
Cursed and blasphemed him as he passed; for none
Knew good from evil, though their names were hung
In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,
As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,—

XXIX

'The Fiend, whose name was Legion; Death, Decay,
Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale,
Wingèd and wan diseases, an array
Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale;
Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil
Of food and mirth hiding his mortal head;
And, without whom all these might nought avail,
Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread
Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

XXX

'His spirit is their power, and they his slaves
In air, and light, and thought, and language, dwell;
And keep their state from palaces to graves,
In all resorts of men—invisible,
But when, in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell
To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,
Black-wingèd demon forms—whom, from the hell,
His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies,
He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

XXXI

'In the world's youth his empire was as firm
As its foundations . . . Soon the Spirit of Good,
Though in the likeness of a loathsome worm,
Sprang from the billows of the formless flood,
Which shrank and fled; and with that Fiend of blood
Renewed the doubtful war . . . Thrones then first shook,
And earth's immense and trampled multitude
In hope on their own powers began to look,
And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook.

XXXII

'Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,
In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came,
Even where they slept amid the night of ages,
Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame
Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name!
And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave
New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame
Upon the combat shone—a light to save,
Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

XXXIII

'Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive
With its oppressors in a strife of blood,
Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive,
And in each bosom of the multitude
Justice and truth with Custom's hydra brood
Wage silent war; when Priests and Kings dissemble
In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,
When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,
The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations tremble!

XXXIV

'Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home
Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears;
Though thou may'st hear that earth is now become
The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,
The vile reward of their dishonoured years,
He will dividing give.—The victor Fiend,
Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears
His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend
An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

XXXV

'List, stranger, list, mine is an human form,
Like that thou wearest—touch me—shrink not now!
My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm
With human blood.—'Twas many years ago,
Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know
The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep
My heart was pierced with sympathy, for woe
Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep,
In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep.

XXXVI

'Woe could not be mine own, since far from men
I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,
By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain-glen;
And near the waves, and through the forests wild,
I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled:
For I was calm while tempest shook the sky:
But when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,
I wept, sweet tears, yet too tumultuously
For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in ecstasy.

XXXVII

'These were forebodings of my fate—before
A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,
It had been nurtured in divinest lore:
A dying poet gave me books, and blessed
With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest

In which I watched him as he died away—
A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest
Of our lone mountains: and this lore did sway
My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.

XXXVIII

'Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold
I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,
For they weep not; and Wisdom had unrolled
The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe,—
To few can she that warning vision show—
For I loved all things with intense devotion;
So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,
Like earthquake did uplift the stagnant ocean
Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

XXXIX

'When first the living blood through all these veins
Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth,
And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains 471
Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.
I saw, and started from my cottage-hearth;
And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness,
Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth— 475
And laughed in light and music: soon, sweet madness
Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

XL

'Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire—
Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover
Like shadows o'er my brain; and strange desire, 480
The tempest of a passion, raging over
My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,—
Which passed; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far,
Came—then I loved; but not a human lover!
For when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star 485
Shone through the woodbine-wreaths which round my casement were.

XLI

''Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.
I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank
Under the billows of the heaving sea;
But from its beams deep love my spirit drank, 490
And to my brain the boundless world now shrank
Into one thought—one image—yes, for ever!
Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank,
The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver
Through my benighted mind—and were extinguished never.

XLII

'The day passed thus: at night, methought in dream
A shape of speechless beauty did appear:
It stood like light on a careering stream
Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere;
A wingèd youth, his radiant brow did wear
The Morning Star: a wild dissolving bliss
Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,
And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness
Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss,—

XLIII

'And said: "A Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden,
How wilt thou prove thy worth?" Then joy and sleep
Together fled, my soul was deeply laden,
And to the shore I went to muse and weep;
But as I moved, over my heart did creep
A joy less soft, but more profound and strong
Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep
The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue
Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

XLIV

'How, to that vast and peopled city led,
Which was a field of holy warfare then,
I walked among the dying and the dead,
And shared in fearless deeds with evil men,
Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—
How I braved death for liberty and truth,
And spurned at peace, and power, and fame—and when
Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,
How sadly I returned—might move the hearer's ruth:

XLV

'Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said—
Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,
I was not left, like others, cold and dead;
The Spirit whom I loved, in solitude
Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—
These were his voice, and well I understood
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright
With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.

XLVI

'In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,
When the dim nights were moonless, have I known
Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers
When thought revisits them:—know thou alone,
That after many wondrous years were flown,

I was awakened by a shriek of woe;
And over me a mystic robe was thrown,
By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow
Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.'

XLVII

'Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart?'
'Fear it!' she said, with brief and passionate cry,
And spake no more: that silence made me start—
I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,
Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky;
Beneath the rising moon seen far away,
Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high,
Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

XLVIII

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,
So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain—
Wild music woke me: we had passed the ocean
Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—
And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain
Of waters, azure with the noontide day.
Ethereal mountains shone around—a Fane
Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay
On the blue sunny deep, resplendent far away.

XLIX

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand
Has never built, nor ecstasy, nor dream
Reared in the cities of enchanted land:
'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream
Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam
Of the unrisen moon among the clouds
Is gathering—when with many a golden beam
The thronging constellations rush in crowds,
Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

L

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,
When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce
Genius beholds it rise, his native home,
Girt by the deserts of the Universe;
Yet, nor in painting's light, or mightier verse,
Or sculpture's marble language, can invest
That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse
That incommunicable sight, and rest
Upon the labouring brain and overburdened breast.

LI

Winding among the lawny islands fair,
Whose blosmy forests starred the shadowy deep,
The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair

Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,
Encircling that vast Fane's aërial heap:
We disembarked, and through a portal wide
We passed—whose roof of moonstone carved, did keep
A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,
Sculptures like life and thought; immovable, deep-eyed.

LII

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof
Was diamond, which had drank the lightning's sheen
In darkness, and now poured it through the woof
Of spell-inwoven clouds hung there to screen
Its blinding splendour—through such veil was seen
That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;
Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,
And hornèd moons, and meteors strange and fair,
On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere!

LIII

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light
Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away
The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright
With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day;
And on the jasper walls around, there lay
Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,
Which did the Spirit's history display;
A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,
Which, in their wingèd dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

LIV

Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne,
The Great, who had departed from mankind,
A mighty Senate;—some, whose white hair shone
Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind;
Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind;
And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;
And some had lyres whose strings were intertwined
With pale and clinging flames, which ever there
Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal air.

LV

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,
Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,
Distinct with circling steps which rested on
Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came
Into that hall, she shrieked the Spirit's name
And fell; and vanished slowly from the sight.
Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,
Which gathering, filled that dome of woven light,
Blotting its spherèd stars with supernatural night.

LVI

Then first, two glittering lights were seen to glide
In circles on the amethystine floor,
Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,
Like meteors on a river's grassy shore,
They round each other rolled, dilating more
And more—then rose, commingling into one,
One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er
A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown
Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne.

LVII

The cloud which rested on that cone of flame
Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form,
Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,
The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm
Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform
The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state
Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm
Sinking upon their hearts and mine. He sate
Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate.

LVIII

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw
Over my brow—a hand supported me,
Whose touch was magic strength: an eye of blue
Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;
And a voice said:—'Thou must a listener be
This day—two mighty Spirits now return,
Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea,
They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn;
A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn!

LIX

I looked, and lo! one stood forth eloquently,
His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow
Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,
The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when in their flow
Through the bright air, the soft winds as they blow
Wake the green world—his gestures did obey
The oracular mind that made his features glow,
And where his curvèd lips half-open lay,
Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

LX

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair
He stood thus beautiful: but there was One
Who sate beside him like his shadow there,
And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known
To be thus fair, by the few lines alone

Which through her floating locks and gathered cloak,
Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:—
None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke
Memories which found a tongue as thus he silence broke.

CANTO II

I

The starlight smile of children, the sweet looks
Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,
The murmur of the unreposing brooks,
And the green light which, shifting overhead,
Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,
The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,
The lamplight through the rafters cheerly spread,
And on the twining flax—in life's young hours
These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's folded powers.

II

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,
Such impulses within my mortal frame
Arose, and they were dear to memory,
Like tokens of the dead:—but others came
Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame
Of the past world, the vital words and deeds
Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,
Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds
Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

III

I heard, as all have heard, the various story
Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.
Feeble historians of its shame and glory,
False disputants on all its hopes and fears,
Victims who worshipped ruin,—chroniclers
Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state
Yet, flattering power, had given its ministers
A throne of judgement in the grave:—'twas fate,
That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

IV

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane
Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,
And stabled in our homes,—until the chain
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide
That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

V

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,
And the ethereal shapes which are suspended
Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,
The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended
The colours of the air since first extended
It cradled the young world, none wandered forth
To see or feel: a darkness had descended
On every heart: the light which shows its worth,
Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

VI

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,
Was as a dungeon to my blasted kind;
All that despair from murdered hope inherits
They sought, and in their helpless misery blind,
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,
And stronger tyrants:—a dark gulf before,
The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned; behind,
Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore
On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore.

VII

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe
Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,
And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro
Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought
The worship thence which they each other taught.
Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn
Even to the ills again from which they sought
Such refuge after death!—well might they learn
To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

VIII

For they all pined in bondage; body and soul,
Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent
Before one Power, to which supreme control
Over their will by their own weakness lent,
Made all its many names omnipotent;
All symbols of things evil, all divine;
And hymns of blood or mockery, which rent
The air from all its fanes, did intertwine
Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

IX

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,
And in no careless heart transcribed the tale;
But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary
In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale
By famine, from a mother's desolate wail

O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood
Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale
With the heart's warfare; did I gather food
To feed my many thoughts: a tameless multitude!

X

I wandered through the wrecks of days departed
Far by the desolated shore, when even
O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted
The light of moonrise; in the northern Heaven,
Among the clouds near the horizon driven,
The mountains lay beneath our planet pale;
Around me, broken tombs and columns riven
Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale
Waked in those ruins gray its everlasting wail!

XI

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,
Nor had I heard the story of their deeds;
But dwellings of a race of mightier men,
And monuments of less ungentle creeds
Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds
The language which they speak; and now, to me
The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,
The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,
Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery.

XII

Such man has been, and such may yet become!
Ay, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they
Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome
Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway
Of the vast stream of ages bear away
My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—
Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray
Of the still moon, my spirit onward past
Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

XIII

It shall be thus no more! too long, too long,
Sons of the glorious dead, have ye lain bound
In darkness and in ruin!—Hope is strong,
Justice and Truth their wingèd child have found—
Awake! arise! until the mighty sound
Of your career shall scatter in its gust
The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground
Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,
Whose Idol has so long betrayed your impious trust!

XIV

It must be so—I will arise and waken
The multitude, and like a sulphurous hill,
Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken

The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill
The world with cleansing fire: it must, it will—
It may not be restrained!—and who shall stand
Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still,
But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land
A tower whose marble walls the leaguèd storms withstand!

XV

One summer night, in commune with the hope
Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins gray
I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope;
And ever from that hour upon me lay
The burden of this hope, and night or day,
In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:
Among mankind, or when gone far away
To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest
Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.

XVI

These hopes found words through which my spirit sought
To weave a bondage of such sympathy,
As might create some response to the thought
Which ruled me now—and as the vapours lie
Bright in the outspread morning's radiancy,
So were these thoughts invested with the light
Of language: and all bosoms made reply
On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might
Through darkness wide and deep those trancèd spirits smite.

XVII

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,
And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother,
When I could feel the listener's senses swim,
And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother
Even as my words evoked them—and another,
And yet another, I did fondly deem,
Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;
And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,
As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

XVIII

Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth
Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,
Did Laon and his friend, on one gray plinth,
Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,
Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep:
And that this friend was false, may now be said
Calmly—that he like other men could weep
Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread
Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

XIX

Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,
I must have sought dark respite from its stress
In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—
For to tread life's dismaying wilderness
Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,
Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,
Is hard—but I betrayed it not, nor less
With love that scorned return, sought to unbind
The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

XX

With deathless minds which leave where they have passed
A path of light, my soul communion knew;
Till from that glorious intercourse, at last,
As from a mine of magic store, I drew
Words which were weapons;—round my heart there grew
The adamantine armour of their power,
And from my fancy wings of golden hue
Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower,
A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

XXI

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes
Were lodestars of delight, which drew me home
When I might wander forth; nor did I prize
Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome
Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,
And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,
Since kin were cold, and friends had now become
Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,
Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.

XXII

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,
Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age
In all but its sweet looks and mien divine:
Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage
A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,
When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought
Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage
To overflow with tears, or converse fraught
With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

XXIII

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,
A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
One impulse of her being—in her lightness

Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,
To nourish some far desert: she did seem
Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,
Like the bright shade of some immortal dream
Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

XXIV

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
A second self, far dearer and more fair;
Which clothed in undissolving radiancy
All those steep paths which languor and despair
Of human things, had made so dark and bare,
But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft
Of friends, and overcome by lonely care,
Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

XXV

Once she was dear, now she was all I had
To love in human life—this playmate sweet,
This child of twelve years old—so she was made
My sole associate, and her willing feet
Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,
Beyond the aëreal mountains whose vast cells
The unreposing billows ever beat,
Through forests wide and old, and lawny dells
Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

XXVI

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand
When twined in mine: she followed where I went,
Through the lone paths of our immortal land.
It had no waste but some memorial lent
Which strung me to my toil—some monument
Vital with mind: then, Cythna by my side,
Until the bright and beaming day were spent,
Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,
Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied.

XXVII

And soon I could not have refused her—thus
For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er
Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:
And when the pauses of the lulling air
Of noon beside the sea, had made a lair
For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,
And I kept watch over her slumbers there,
While, as the shifting visions o'er her swept,
Amid her innocent rest by turns she smiled and wept.

XXVIII

And, in the murmur of her dreams was heard
Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly
She would arise, and, like the secret bird
Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky
With her sweet accents—a wild melody!
Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong
The source of passion, whence they rose, to be;
Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,
To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung—

XXIX

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream
Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great
Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme
Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate
Amid the calm which rapture doth create
After its tumult, her heart vibrating,
Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state
From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing
Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring.

XXX

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song
Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,
A mighty congregation, which were strong
Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse
The cloud of that unutterable curse
Which clings upon mankind:—all things became
Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,
Earth, sea and sky, the planets, life and fame
And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

XXXI

And this beloved child thus felt the sway
Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud
The very wind on which it rolls away:
Hers too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed
With music and with light, their fountains flowed
In poesy; and her still and earnest face,
Pallid with feelings which intensely glowed
Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace,
Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace.

XXXII

In me, communion with this purest being
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
In knowledge, which, in hers mine own mind seeing,
Left in the human world few mysteries:
How without fear of evil or disguise

Was Cythna!—what a spirit strong and mild,
  Which death, or pain or peril could despise,
Yet melt in tenderness! what genius wild
Yet mighty, was enclosed within one simple child!

XXXIII

New lore was this—old age, with its gray hair,
  And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,
And icy sneers, is nought: it cannot dare
  To burst the chains which life for ever flings
  On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,
So is it cold and cruel, and is made
  The careless slave of that dark power which brings
Evil, like blight, on man, who, still betrayed,
Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

XXXIV

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep
  The empire of the world: thus Cythna taught
Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,
  Unconscious of the power through which she wrought
  The woof of such intelligible thought,
As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay
  In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought
Why the deceiver and the slave has sway
O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

XXXV

Within that fairest form, the female mind
  Untainted by the poison-clouds which rest
On the dark world, a sacred home did find:
  But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,
  Victorious Evil, which had dispossessed
All native power, had those fair children torn,
  And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,
And minister to lust its joys forlorn,
Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

XXXVI

This misery was but coldly felt, till she
  Became my only friend, who had endued
My purpose with a wider sympathy;
  Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude
  In which the half of humankind were mewed
Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves,
  She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food
To the hyaena lust, who, among graves,
Over his loathèd meal, laughing in agony, raves.

XXXVII

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,
  Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her:—'Cythna sweet,
Well with the world art thou unreconciled;

Never will peace and human nature meet
Till free and equal man and woman greet
Domestic peace; and ere this power can make
In human hearts its calm and holy seat,
This slavery must be broken'—as I spake,
From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

XXXVIII

She replied earnestly:—'It shall be mine,
This task, mine, Laon!—thou hast much to gain;
Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,
If she should lead a happy female train
To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,
When myriads at thy call shall throng around
The Golden City.'—Then the child did strain
My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound
Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

XXXIX

I smiled, and spake not.—'Wherefore dost thou smile
At what I say? Laon, I am not weak,
And though my cheek might become pale the while,
With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek
Through their array of banded slaves to wreak
Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought
It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek
To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot
And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

XL

'Whence came I what I am? Thou, Laon, knowest
How a young child should thus undaunted be;
Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest,
Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,
So to become most good and great and free,
Yet far beyond this Ocean's utmost roar
In towers and huts are many like to me,
Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore
As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

XLI

'Think'st thou that I shall speak unskilfully,
And none will heed me? I remember now,
How once, a slave in tortures doomed to die,
Was saved, because in accents sweet and low
He sung a song his Judge loved long ago,
As he was led to death.—All shall relent
Who hear me—tears, as mine have flowed, shall flow,
Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent
As renovates the world; a will omnipotent!

XLII

'Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,
Through Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells
Will I descend, where'er in abjectness
Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,
There with the music of thine own sweet spells
Will disenchant the captives, and will pour
For the despairing, from the crystal wells
Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,
And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

XLIII

'Can man be free if woman be a slave?
Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air,
To the corruption of a closèd grave!
Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear
Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare
To trample their oppressors? in their home
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear
The shape of woman—hoary Crime would come
Behind, and Fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

XLIV

'I am a child:—I would not yet depart.
When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp
Aloft which thou hast kindled in my heart.
Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp
Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp
Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm
Thy Cythna ever—truth its radiant stamp
Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm
Upon her children's brow, dark Falsehood to disarm.

XLV

'Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—
Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand
Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean gray;
Amid the dwellers of this lonely land
I shall remain alone—and thy command
Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,
And, multitudinous as the desert sand
Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance,
Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

XLVI

'Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,
Which from remotest glens two warring winds
Involve in fire which not the loosened fountain
Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds
Of evil, catch from our uniting minds

The spark which must consume them;—Cythna then
  Will have cast off the impotence that binds
Her childhood now, and through the paths of men
Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's den.

XLVII

'We part!—O Laon, I must dare nor tremble
  To meet those looks no more!—Oh, heavy stroke!
Sweet brother of my soul! can I dissemble
  The agony of this thought?'—As thus she spoke
  The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke,
And in my arms she hid her beating breast.
  I remained still for tears—sudden she woke
As one awakes from sleep, and wildly pressed
My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possessed.

XLVIII

'We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,
  Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess,
Within whose happy silence, thus embraced
  We might survive all ills in one caress:
  Nor doth the grave—I fear 'tis passionless—
Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:—we meet again
  Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain
When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain.'

XLIX

I could not speak, though she had ceased, for now
  The fountains of her feeling, swift and deep,
Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow;
  So we arose, and by the starlight steep
  Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,
But, pale, were calm with passion—thus subdued
  Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep,
We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,
Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

CANTO III

I

What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber
  That night, I know not; but my own did seem
As if they might ten thousand years outnumber
  Of waking life, the visions of a dream
  Which hid in one dim gulf the troubled stream
Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,
  Whose limits yet were never memory's theme:
And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds passed,
Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

II

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace
More time than might make gray the infant world,
Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:
When the third came, like mist on breezes curled,
From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurled:
Methought, upon the threshold of a cave
I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled
With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,
Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave.

III

We lived a day as we were wont to live,
But Nature had a robe of glory on,
And the bright air o'er every shape did weave
Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,
The leafless bough among the leaves alone,
Had being clearer than its own could be,
And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown,
In this strange vision, so divine to me,
That, if I loved before, now love was agony.

IV

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,
And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere
Of the calm moon—when suddenly was blended
With our repose a nameless sense of fear;
And from the cave behind I seemed to hear
Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete,
And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,
A tumult and a rush of thronging feet
The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

V

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!
Through the air and over the sea we sped,
And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,
And the winds bore me—through the darkness spread
Around, the gaping earth then vomited
Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung
Upon my flight; and ever, as we fled,
They plucked at Cythna—soon to me then clung
A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

VI

And I lay struggling in the impotence
Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,
Though, still deluded, strove the tortured sense
To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound
Which in the light of morn was poured around

Our dwelling—breathless, pale, and unaware
I rose, and all the cottage crowded found
With armèd men, whose glittering swords were bare,
And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

VII

And, ere with rapid lips and gathered brow
I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—
It was a feeble shriek, faint, far and low,
Arrested me—my mien grew calm and meek,
And grasping a small knife, I went to seek
That voice among the crowd—'twas Cythna's cry!
Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak
Its whirlwind rage:—so I passed quietly
Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie.

VIII

I started to behold her, for delight
And exultation, and a joyance free,
Solemn, serene and lofty, filled the light
Of the calm smile with which she looked on me:
So that I feared some brainless ecstasy,
Wrought from that bitter woe, had wildered her—
'Farewell! farewell!' she said, as I drew nigh.
'At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,
Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

IX

'Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope,
These bloody men are but the slaves who bear
Their mistress to her task—it was my scope
The slavery where they drag me now, to share,
And among captives willing chains to wear
Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend!
Let our first triumph trample the despair
Which would ensnare us now, for in the end,
In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend.'

X

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,
Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew
With seeming-careless glance; not many were
Around her, for their comrades just withdrew
To guard some other victim—so I drew
My knife, and with one impulse, suddenly
All unaware three of their number slew,
And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry
My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

XI

What followed then, I know not—for a stroke
On my raised arm and naked head, came down,
Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke,

I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,
And up a rock which overhangs the town,
By the steep path were bearing me: below,
The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown
The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow
Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

XII

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,
Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,
Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude
Of distant seas, from ages long gone by,
Had made a landmark; o'er its height to fly
Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,
Has power—and when the shades of evening lie
On Earth and Ocean, its carved summits cast
The sunken daylight far through the aërial waste.

XIII

They bore me to a cavern in the hill
Beneath that column, and unbound me there:
And one did strip me stark; and one did fill
A vessel from the putrid pool; one bare
A lighted torch, and four with friendless care
Guided my steps the cavern-paths along,
Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair
We wound, until the torch's fiery tongue
Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

XIV

They raised me to the platform of the pile,
That column's dizzy height:—the grate of brass
Through which they thrust me, open stood the while,
As to its ponderous and suspended mass,
With chains which eat into the flesh, alas!
With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound:
The grate, as they departed to repass,
With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound
Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom were drowned.

XV

The noon was calm and bright:—around that column
The overhanging sky and circling sea
Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn
The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,
So that I knew not my own misery:
The islands and the mountains in the day
Like clouds reposed afar; and I could see
The town among the woods below that lay,
And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

1223 torches' *edd. 1818, 1839.*

XVI

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed
Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone
Swayed in the air:—so bright, that noon did breed
No shadow in the sky beside mine own—
Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.
Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame
Rested like night, all else was clearly shown
In that broad glare, yet sound to me none came,
But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

XVII

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!
A ship was lying on the sunny main,
Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—
Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again
Waked, with its presence, in my trancèd brain
The stings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:
I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain
Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,
And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold.

XVIII

I watched, until the shades of evening wrapped
Earth like an exhalation—then the bark
Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapped.
It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:
Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark
Its path no more!—I sought to close mine eyes,
But like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;
I would have risen, but ere that I could rise,
My parchèd skin was split with piercing agonies.

XIX

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever
Its adamantine links, that I might die:
O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,
Forgive me, if, reserved for victory,
The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—
That starry night, with its clear silence, sent
Tameless resolve which laughed at misery
Into my soul—linkèd remembrance lent
To that such power, to me such a severe content.

XX

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair
And die, I questioned not; nor, though the Sun
Its shafts of agony kindling through the air
Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,
Or when the stars their visible courses run,

Or morning, the wide universe was spread
In dreary calmness round me, did I shun
Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead
From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

XXI

Two days thus passed—I neither raved nor died—
Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest
Built in mine entrails; I had spurned aside
The water-vessel, while despair possessed
My thoughts, and now no drop remained! The uprest
Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust
Which had been left, was to my craving breast
Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust,
And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust.

XXII

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn
Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,
Which through the caverns dreary and forlorn
Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep
With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—
A gulf, a void, a sense of senselessness—
These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep
Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,
A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless!

XXIII

The forms which peopled this terrific trance
I well remember—like a choir of devils,
Around me they involved a giddy dance;
Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels
Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels,
Foul, ceaseless shadows:—thought could not divide
The actual world from these entangling evils,
Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried
All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

XXIV

The sense of day and night, of false and true,
Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst
That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,
Was not a phantom of the realms accursed,
Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first
I know not yet, was it a dream or no.
But both, though not distincter, were immersed
In hues which, when through memory's waste they flow,
Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now.

XXV

Methought that grate was lifted, and the seven
Who brought me thither four stiff corpses bare,
And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven

1324 grate] gate *ed. 1818.*

Hung them on high by the entangled hair:
Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair:
As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,
And eagerly, out in the giddy air,
Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung
Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

XXVI

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,
The dwelling of the many-coloured worm,
Hung there; the white and hollow cheek I drew
To my dry lips—what radiance did inform
Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?
Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost
Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm
Within my teeth!—A whirlwind keen as frost
Then in its sinking gulfs my sickening spirit tossed.

XXVII

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane
Arose, and bore me in its dark career
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane
On the verge of formless space—it languished there,
And dying, left a silence lone and drear,
More horrible than famine:—in the deep
The shape of an old man did then appear,
Stately and beautiful; that dreadful sleep
His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.

XXVIII

And, when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw
That column, and those corpses, and the moon,
And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw
My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon
Of senseless death would be accorded soon;—
When from that stony gloom a voice arose,
Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune
The midnight pines; the grate did then unclose,
And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

XXIX

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled:
As they were loosened by that Hermit old,
Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,
To answer those kind looks—he did enfold
His giant arms around me, to uphold
My wretched frame, my scorchèd limbs he wound
In linen moist and balmy, and as cold
As dew to drooping leaves;—the chain, with sound
Like earthquake, through the chasm of that steep stair did bound,

XXX

As, lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard,
Were billows leaping on the harbour-bar,
And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirred
My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star
Shining beside a sail, and distant far
That mountain and its column, the known mark
Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,
So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,
In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

XXXI

For now indeed, over the salt sea-billow
I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape
Of him who ruled the helm, although the pillow
For my light head was hollowed in his lap,
And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,
Fearing it was a fiend: at last, he bent
O'er me his aged face, as if to snap
Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,
And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

XXXII

A soft and healing potion to my lips
At intervals he raised—now looked on high,
To mark if yet the starry giant dips
His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly,
Though he said little, did he speak to me.
'It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,
Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!'
I joyed as those a human tone to hear,
Who in cells deep and lone have languished many a year.

XXXIII

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft
Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams,
Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft
The stars of night grew pallid, and the beams
Of morn descended on the ocean-streams,
And still that aged man, so grand and mild,
Tended me, even as some sick mother seems
To hang in hope over a dying child,
Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

XXXIV

And then the night-wind steaming from the shore,
Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,
And the swift boat the little waves which bore,
Were cut by its keen keel, though slantingly;
Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see
The myrtle-blossoms starring the dim grove,
As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee
On sidelong wing, into a silent cove,
Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.

CANTO IV

I

The old man took the oars, and soon the bark
Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone;
It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark
With blooming ivy-trails was overgrown;
Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,
And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,
Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown
Within the walls of that gray tower, which stood
A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

II

When the old man his boat had anchorèd,
He wound me in his arms with tender care,
And very few, but kindly words he said,
And bore me through the tower adown a stair,
Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear
For many a year had fallen.—We came at last
To a small chamber, which with mosses rare
Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed
Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

III

The moon was darting through the lattices
Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—
So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,
The old man opened them; the moonlight lay
Upon a lake whose waters wove their play
Even to the threshold of that lonely home:
Within was seen in the dim wavering ray
The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome
Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become.

IV

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,—
And I was on the margin of a lake,
A lonely lake, amid the forests vast
And snowy mountains:—did my spirit wake
From sleep as many-coloured as the snake
That girds eternity? in life and truth,
Might not my heart its cravings ever slake?
Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,
And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth?

V

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness,
Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow
With supernatural shades of clinging sadness;
That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,
By my sick couch was busy to and fro,

Like a strong spirit ministrant of good:
When I was healed, he led me forth to show
The wonders of his sylvan solitude,
And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

VI

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill
From all my madness told; like mine own heart,
Of Cythna would he question me, until
That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,
From his familiar lips—it was not art,
Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—
When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart
A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke
When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

VII

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,
My thoughts their due array did re-assume
Through the enchantments of that Hermit old;
Then I bethought me of the glorious doom
Of those who sternly struggle to relume
The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,
And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom
Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought—
That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

VIII

That hoary man had spent his livelong age
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,
When they are gone into the senseless damp
Of graves;—his spirit thus became a lamp
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed:
Through peopled haunts, the City and the Camp,
Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,
And all the ways of men among mankind he read.

IX

But custom maketh blind and obdurate
The loftiest hearts:—he had beheld the woe
In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate
Which made them abject, would preserve them so;
And in such faith, some steadfast joy to know,
He sought this cell: but when fame went abroad,
That one in Argolis did undergo
Torture for liberty, and that the crowd
High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood;

X

And that the multitude was gathering wide,—
His spirit leaped within his aged frame,
In lonely peace he could no more abide,

But to the land on which the victor's flame
Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:
Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue
Was as a sword, of truth—young Laon's name
Rallied their secret hopes, though tyrants sung
Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

XI

He came to the lone column on the rock,
And with his sweet and mighty eloquence
The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,
And made them melt in tears of penitence.
They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.
'Since this,' the old man said, 'seven years are spent,
While slowly truth on thy benighted sense
Has crept; the hope which wildered it has lent
Meanwhile, to me the power of a sublime intent.

XII

'Yes, from the records of my youthful state,
And from the lore of bards and sages old,
From whatsoe'er my wakened thoughts create
Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,
Have I collected language to unfold
Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore
Doctrines of human power my words have told,
They have been heard, and men aspire to more
Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

XIII

'In secret chambers parents read, and weep,
My writings to their babes, no longer blind;
And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,
And vows of faith each to the other bind;
And marriageable maidens, who have pined
With love, till life seemed melting through their look,
A warmer zeal, a nobler hope now find;
And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,
Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swoln mountain-brook.

XIV

'The tyrants of the Golden City tremble
At voices which are heard about the streets,
The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble
The lies of their own heart; but when one meets
Another at the shrine, he inly weets,
Though he says nothing, that the truth is known;
Murderers are pale upon the judgement-seats,
And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,
And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

XV

'Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds
Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
Bloody and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw
All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway
Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw
This hope, compels all spirits to obey,
Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

XVI

'For I have been thy passive instrument'—
(As thus the old man spake, his countenance
Gleamed on me like a spirit's)—'thou hast lent
To me, to all, the power to advance
Towards this unforeseen deliverance
From our ancestral chains—ay, thou didst rear
That lamp of hope on high, which time nor chance
Nor change may not extinguish, and my share
Of good, was o'er the world its gathered beams to bear.

XVII

'But I, alas! am both unknown and old,
And though the woof of wisdom I know well
To dye in hues of language, I am cold
In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell,
My manners note that I did long repel;
But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng
Were like the star whose beams the waves compel
And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue
Were as a lance to quell the mailèd crest of wrong.

XVIII

'Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length
Wouldst rise, perchance the very slaves would spare
Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength
Of words—for lately did a maiden fair,
Who from her childhood has been taught to bear
The tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make
Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear,
And with these quiet words—"For thine own sake
I prithee spare me;"—did with ruth so take

XIX

'All hearts, that even the torturer who had bound
Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,
Loosened her, weeping then; nor could be found
One human hand to harm her—unassailed
Therefore she walks through the great City, veiled

In virtue's adamantine eloquence,
'Gainst scorn, and death and pain thus trebly mailed,
And blending, in the smiles of that defence,
The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

XX

'The wild-eyed women throng around her path:
From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust
Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,
Or the caresses of his sated lust
They congregate:—in her they put their trust;
The tyrants send their armèd slaves to quell
Her power;—they, even like a thunder-gust
Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell
Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

XXI

'Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach
To woman, outraged and polluted long;
Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach
For those fair hands now free, while armèd wrong
Trembles before her look, though it be strong;
Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,
And matrons with their babes, a stately throng!
Lovers renew the vows which they did plight
In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite,

XXII

'And homeless orphans find a home near her,
And those poor victims of the proud, no less,
Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir,
Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness:—
In squalid huts, and in its palaces
Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne
Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress
All evil, and her foes relenting turn,
And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

XXIII

'So in the populous City, a young maiden
Has baffled Havoc of the prey which he
Marks as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen
Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,—
False arbiter between the bound and free;
And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns
The multitudes collect tumultuously,
And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns
Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones.

XXIV

'Blood soon, although unwillingly, to shed,
The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves,
The hoodwinked Angel of the blind and dead,

Custom, with iron mace points to the graves
Where her own standard desolately waves
Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.
Many yet stand in her array—"she paves
Her path with human hearts," and o'er it flings
The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

XXV

'There is a plain beneath the City's wall,
Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast,
Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call
Ten thousand standards wide, they load the blast
Which bears one sound of many voices past,
And startles on his throne their sceptred foe:
He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,
And that his power hath passed away, doth know—
Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow?

XXVI

'The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain:
Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood,
They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;
Carnage and ruin have been made their food
From infancy—ill has become their good,
And for its hateful sake their will has wove
The chains which eat their hearts—the multitude
Surrounding them, with words of human love,
Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

XXVII

'Over the land is felt a sudden pause,
As night and day those ruthless bands around,
The watch of love is kept:—a trance which awes
The thoughts of men with hope—as, when the sound
Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds confound,
Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear
Feels silence sink upon his heart—thus bound,
The conquerors pause, and oh! may freemen ne'er
Clasp the relentless knees of Dread the murderer!

XXVIII

'If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice
Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice
A wretched fall!—Uplift thy charmèd voice!
Pour on those evil men the love that lies
Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—
Arise, my friend, farewell!'—As thus he spake,
From the green earth lightly I did arise,
As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,
And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake.

1625 Where] When *ed. 1818.*

XXIX

I saw my countenance reflected there;—
And then my youth fell on me like a wind
Descending on still waters—my thin hair
Was prematurely gray, my face was lined
With channels, such as suffering leaves behind,
Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek
And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find
Their food and dwelling; though mine eyes might speak
A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak.

XXX

And though their lustre now was spent and faded,
Yet in my hollow looks and withered mien
The likeness of a shape for which was braided
The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—
One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,
And left it vacant—'twas her lover's face—
It might resemble her—it once had been
The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace
Which her mind's shadow cast, left there a lingering trace.

XXXI

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.
Glory and joy and peace, had come and gone.
Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled
Which steeped its skirts in gold? or, dark and lone,
Doth it not through the paths of night unknown,
On outspread wings of its own wind upborne
Pour rain upon the earth? The stars are shown,
When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn
Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

XXXII

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man
I left, with interchange of looks and tears,
And lingering speech, and to the Camp began
My way. O'er many a mountain-chain which rears
Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears
My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,
And gaily now meseems serene earth wears
The blosmy spring's star-bright investiture,
A vision which aught sad from sadness might allure.

XXXIII

My powers revived within me, and I went
As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,
Through many a vale of that broad continent.
At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass
Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was,

Not like a child of death, among them ever;
  When I arose from rest, a woful mass
That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,
As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.

XXXIV

Aye as I went, that maiden who had reared
  The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds
The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,
  Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds
  With whatso'er it finds, or flowers or weeds!
Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade
  Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?
Why was this hope not torture? Yet it made
A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

CANTO V

I

Over the utmost hill at length I sped,
  A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low
Over the Asian mountains, and outspread
  The plain, the City, and the Camp below,
  Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow;
The City's moonlit spires and myriad lamps,
  Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,
And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps,
Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earthquake stamps.

II

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,
  And those who sate tending the beacon's light,
And the few sounds from that vast multitude
  Made silence more profound.—Oh, what a might
  Of human thought was cradled in that night!
How many hearts impenetrably veiled
  Beat underneath its shade, what secret fight
Evil and good, in woven passions mailed,
Waged through that silent throng; a war that never failed!

III

And now the Power of Good held victory,
  So, through the labyrinth of many a tent,
Among the silent millions who did lie
  In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;
  The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent
From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed
  An armèd youth—over his spear he bent
His downward face.—'A friend!' I cried aloud,
And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

IV

I sate beside him while the morning beam
Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him
Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!
Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim:
And all the while, methought, his voice did swim
As if it drownèd in remembrance were
Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:
At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,
He looked on me, and cried in wonder—'Thou art here!'

V

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;
But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded;
The truth now came upon me, on the ground
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded.
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

VI

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes
We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread
As from the earth did suddenly arise;
From every tent roused by that clamour dread,
Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped
Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far.
Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead
Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war
The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to spare.

VII

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child
Who brings them food, when winter false and fair
Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild
They rage among the camp;—they overbear
The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair
Descends like night—when 'Laon!' one did cry:
Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare
The slaves, and widening through the vaulted sky,
Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

VIII

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,
Like insect tribes before the northern gale:
But swifter still, our hosts encompassèd
Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,
Where even their fierce despair might nought avail,

Hemmed them around!—and then revenge and fear
Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:
One pointed on his foe the mortal spear—
I rushed before its point, and cried, 'Forbear, forbear!'

IX

The spear transfixed my arm that was uplifted
In swift expostulation, and the blood
Gushed round its point: I smiled, and—'Oh! thou gifted
With eloquence which shall not be withstood,
Flow thus!'—I cried in joy, 'thou vital flood,
Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause
For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—
Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—
'Tis well! ye feel the truth of love's benignant laws.

X

'Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.
Ye murdered them, I think, as they did sleep!
Alas, what have ye done? the slightest pain
Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep,
But ye have quenched them—there were smiles to steep
Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe;
And those whom love did set his watch to keep
Around your tents, truth's freedom to bestow,
Ye stabbed as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now.

XI

'Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,
And pain still keener pain for ever breed?
We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill
For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed
On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed
With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven!
And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed
And all that lives or is, to be hath given,
Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven!

XII

'Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past
Be as a grave which gives not up its dead
To evil thoughts.'—A film then overcast
My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled
Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.
When I awoke, I lay mid friends and foes,
And earnest countenances on me shed
The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close
My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose;

XIII

And one whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside,
With quivering lips and humid eyes;—and all
Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide

Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall
In a strange land, round one whom they might call
Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay
Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall
Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array
Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

XIV

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation,
Towards the City then the multitude,
And I among them, went in joy—a nation
Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood
Linked by a jealous interchange of good;
A glorious pageant, more magnificent
Than kingly slaves arrayed in gold and blood,
When they return from carnage, and are sent
In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement.

XV

Afar, the city-walls were thronged on high,
And myriads on each giddy turret clung,
And to each spire far lessening in the sky
Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;
As we approached, a shout of joyance sprung
At once from all the crowd, as if the vast
And peopled Earth its boundless skies among
The sudden clamour of delight had cast,
When from before its face some general wreck had passed.

XVI

Our armies through the City's hundred gates
Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair
Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,
Throng from the mountains when the storms are there
And, as we passed through the calm sunny air
A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed,
The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,
And fairest hands bound them on many a head,
Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

XVII

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:
Those bloody bands so lately reconciled,
Were, ever as they went, by the contrition
Of anger turned to love, from ill beguiled,
And every one on them more gently smiled,
Because they had done evil:—the sweet awe
Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,
And did with soft attraction ever draw
Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

XVIII

And they, and all. in one loud symphony
My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,
'The friend and the preserver of the free!
The parent of this joy!' and fair eyes gifted
With feelings, caught from one who had uplifted
The light of a great spirit, round me shone;
And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted
Like restless clouds before the steadfast sun,—
Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

XIX

Laone was the name her love had chosen,
For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:
Where was Laone now?—The words were frozen
Within my lips with fear; but to subdue
Such dreadful hope, to my great task was due,
And when at length one brought reply, that she
To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew
To judge what need for that great throng might be,
For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea.

XX

Yet need was none for rest or food to care,
Even though that multitude was passing great,
Since each one for the other did prepare
All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate
Of the Imperial House, now desolate,
I passed, and there was found aghast, alone,
The fallen Tyrant!—Silently he sate
Upon the footstool of his golden throne,
Which, starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone.

XXI

Alone, but for one child, who led before him
A graceful dance: the only living thing
Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him
Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring
In his abandonment!—She knew the King
Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove
Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring
Mid her sad task of unregarded love,
That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

XXII

She fled to him, and wildly clasped his feet
When human steps were heard:—he moved nor spoke,
Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet
The gaze of strangers—our loud entrance woke
The echoes of the hall, which circling broke

The calm of its recesses,—like a tomb
Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke
Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom
Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

XXIII

The little child stood up when we came nigh;
Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,
But on her forehead, and within her eye
Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon
Sick with excess of sweetness; on the throne
She leaned;—the King, with gathered brow, and lips
Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown
With hue like that when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

XXIV

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided
Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast
From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded;
A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, cast
One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast,
O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,
A shade of vanished days,—as the tears passed
Which wrapped it, even as with a father's kiss
I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.

XXV

The sceptred wretch then from that solitude
I drew, and, of his change compassionate,
With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.
But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,
With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate
Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare:
Pity, not scorn I felt, though desolate
The desolator now, and unaware
The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

XXVI

I led him forth from that which now might seem
A gorgeous grave: through portals sculptured deep
With imagery beautiful as dream
We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep
Over its unregarded gold to keep
Their silent watch.—The child trod faintingly,
And as she went, the tears which she did weep
Glanced in the starlight; wildered seemèd she,
And when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

XXVII

At last the tyrant cried, 'She hungers, slave,
Stab her, or give her bread!'—It was a tone
Such as sick fancies in a new-made grave

Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known;
He with this child had thus been left alone,
And neither had gone forth for food,—but he
In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,
And she a nursling of captivity 1961
Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change might be.

XXVIII

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn
Thus suddenly; that sceptres ruled no more—
That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone, 1965
Which once made all things subject to its power—
Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour
The past had come again; and the swift fall
Of one so great and terrible of yore,
To desolateness, in the hearts of all 1970
Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.

XXIX

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours
Once in a thousand years, now gathered round
The fallen tyrant;—like the rush of showers
Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground, 1975
Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound
From the wide multitude: that lonely man
Then knew the burden of his change, and found,
Concealing in the dust his visage wan,
Refuge from the keen looks which through his bosom ran.

XXX

And he was faint withal: I sate beside him 1981
Upon the earth, and took that child so fair
From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him
Or her;—when food was brought to them, her share
To his averted lips the child did bear, 1985
But, when she saw he had enough, she ate
And wept the while;—the lonely man's despair
Hunger then overcame, and of his state
Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

XXXI

Slowly the silence of the multitudes 1990
Passed, as when far is heard in some lone dell
The gathering of a wind among the woods—
'And he is fallen!' they cry, 'he who did dwell
Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell
Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer 1995
Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well
Of blood and tears with ruin! he is here!
Sunk in a gulf of scorn from which none may him rear!'

XXXII

Then was heard—'He who judged let him be brought
To judgement! blood for blood cries from the soil
On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!
Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?
Shall they who by the stress of grinding toil
Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,
Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil,
Or creep within his veins at will?—Arise!
And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.'

XXXIII

'What do ye seek? what fear ye,' then I cried,
Suddenly starting forth, 'that ye should shed
The blood of Othman?—if your hearts are tried
In the true love of freedom, cease to dread
This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven spread
In purest light above us all, through earth
Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles shed
For all, let him go free; until the worth
Of human nature win from these a second birth.

XXXIV

'What call ye *justice*? Is there one who ne'er
In secret thought has wished another's ill?—
Are ye all pure? Let those stand forth who hear,
And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill,
If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill
With the false anger of the hypocrite?
Alas, such were not pure,—the chastened will
Of virtue sees that justice is the light
Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite.'

XXXV

The murmur of the people, slowly dying,
Paused as I spake, then those who near me were,
Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying
Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair
Clasped on her lap in silence;—through the air
Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet
In pity's madness, and to the despair
Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet
His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

XXXVI

Then to a home for his repose assigned,
Accompanied by the still throng he went
In silence, where, to soothe his rankling mind,
Some likeness of his ancient state was lent;
And if his heart could have been innocent

As those who pardoned him, he might have ended
His days in peace; but his straight lips were bent,
Men said, into a smile which guile portended,
A sight with which that child like hope with fear was blended.

XXXVII

'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day
Whereon the many nations at whose call
The chains of earth like mist melted away,
Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,
A rite to attest the equality of all
Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake
All went. The sleepless silence did recall
Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make
The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

XXXVIII

The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains
I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail,
As to the plain between the misty mountains
And the great City, with a countenance pale
I went:—it was a sight which might avail
To make men weep exulting tears, for whom
Now first from human power the reverend veil
Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb
Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

XXXIX

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,
The signs of that innumerable host,
To hear one sound of many made, the warning
Of Earth to Heaven from its free children tossed,
While the eternal hills, and the sea lost
In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky
The city's myriad spires of gold, almost
With human joy made mute society—
Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be.

XL

To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,
The Altar of the Federation rear
Its pile i' the midst; a work, which the devotion
Of millions in one night created there,
Sudden, as when the moonrise makes appear
Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid
Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear
The light of genius; its still shadow hid
Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

XLI

To hear the restless multitudes for ever
Around the base of that great Altar flow,
As on some mountain-islet burst and shiver

Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow
As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,
To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim
Like beams through floating clouds on waves below
Falling in pauses, from that Altar dim
As silver-sounding tongues breathed an aëreal hymn.

XLII

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn
Lethean joy! so that all those assembled
Cast off their memories of the past outworn;
Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,
And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled;
So with a beating heart I went, and one,
Who having much, covets yet more, resembled;
A lost and dear possession, which not won,
He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

XLIII

To the great Pyramid I came: its stair
With female choirs was thronged: the loveliest
Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare;
As I approached, the morning's golden mist,
Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kissed
With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone
Like Athos seen from Samothracia, dressed
In earliest light, by vintagers, and one
Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne:

XLIV

A Form most like the imagined habitant
Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,
By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to enchant
The faiths of men: all mortal eyes were drawn,
As famished mariners through strange seas gone
Gaze on a burning watch-tower, by the light
Of those divinest lineaments—alone
With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight
I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.

XLV

And, neither did I hear the acclamations,
Which from brief silence bursting, filled the air
With her strange name and mine, from all the nations
Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there
From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair
Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind
And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,
Leaning upon my friend, till like a wind
To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind.

XLVI

Like music of some minstrel heavenly-gifted,
To one whom fiends enthral, this voice to me;
Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted,
I was so calm and joyous.—I could see
The platform where we stood, the statues three
Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine,
The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea;
As when eclipse hath passed, things sudden shine
To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

XLVII

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:
But soon her voice the calmness which it shed
Gathered, and—'Thou art whom I sought to see,
And thou art our first votary here,' she said:
'I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!—
And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,
Thou dost resemble him alone—I spread
This veil between us two, that thou beneath
Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

XLVIII

'For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?
Yes, but those joys which silence well requite
Forbid reply;—why men have chosen me
To be the Priestess of this holiest rite
I scarcely know, but that the floods of light
Which flow over the world, have borne me hither
To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite
Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither
From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beat together,

XLIX

'If our own will as others' law we bind,
If the foul worship trampled here we fear;
If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!'—
She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there
Three shapes around her ivory throne appear;
One was a Giant, like a child asleep
On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were
In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep
Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;

L

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk
Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast
A human babe and a young basilisk;
Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest
In Autumn eves. The third Image was dressed

In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies;
Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, repressed
Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,
While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond eyes.

LI

Beside that Image then I sate, while she
Stood, mid the throngs which ever ebbed and flowed,
Like light amid the shadows of the sea
Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd
That touch which none who feels forgets, bestowed;
And whilst the sun returned the steadfast gaze
Of the great Image, as o'er Heaven it glode,
That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze
Burned o'er the isles. All stood in joy and deep amaze—
—When in the silence of all spirits there
Laone's voice was felt, and through the air
Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair:—

1

'Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong
As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,
That float among the blinding beams of morning;
And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,
Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—
Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning
Of thy voice sublime and holy;
Its free spirits here assembled,
See thee, feel thee, know thee now,—
To thy voice their hearts have trembled
Like ten thousand clouds which flow
With one wide wind as it flies!—
Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise
To hail thee, and the elements they chain
And their own will, to swell the glory of thy train.

2

'O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
Mother and soul of all to which is given
The light of life, the loveliness of being,
Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,
Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert
In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing
The shade of thee:—now, millions start
To feel thy lightnings through them burning:
Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,
Or Sympathy the sad tears turning
To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,
Descends amidst us;—Scorn, and Hate,
Revenge and Selfishness are desolate—
A hundred nations swear that there shall be
Pity and Peace and Love, among the good and free!

3

'Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,
And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:
The powerful and the wise had sought
Thy coming, thou in light descending
O'er the wide land which is thine own
Like the Spring whose breath is blending
All blasts of fragrance into one,
Comest upon the paths of men!—
Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,
And all her children here in glory meet
To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

4

'My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains,
The gray sea-shore, the forests and the fountains,
Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow;
For oft we still must weep, since we are human.
A stormy night's serenest morrow,
Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,
Whose clouds are smiles of those that die
Like infants without hopes or fears,
And whose beams are joys that lie
In blended hearts, now holds dominion;
The dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion
Borne, swift as sunrise, far illumines space,
And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

5

'My brethren, we are free! The fruits are glowing
Beneath the stars, and the night winds are flowing
O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—
Never again may blood of bird or beast
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,
To the pure skies in accusation steaming;
Avenging poisons shall have ceased
To feed disease and fear and madness,
The dwellers of the earth and air
Shall throng around our steps in gladness
Seeking their food or refuge there.
Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,
And Science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

6

'Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!
Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!
Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!
Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,
Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,
The green lands cradled in the roar
Of western waves, and wildernesses
Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans
Where morning dyes her golden tresses,
Shall soon partake our high emotions:
Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear
The Fiend-God, when our charmèd name he hear,
Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,
While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!'

LII

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night entwining
Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;
She, like a spirit through the darkness shining,
In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong,
As if to lingering winds they did belong,
Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech
With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,
Which whoso heard, was mute, for it could teach
To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach.

LIII

Her voice was as a mountain-stream which sweeps
The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,
And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps
In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake
Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make
Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,
The multitude so moveless did partake
Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew
As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder grew.

LIV

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then
In groups around the fires, which from the sea
Even to the gorge of the first mountain-glen
Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free
Was spread beneath many a dark cypress-tree,
Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red flame,
Reclining, as they ate, of Liberty,
And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,
Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

2295 flame] light *ed. 1818.*

LV

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,
Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles
In the embrace of Autumn;—to each other
As when some parent fondly reconciles
Her warring children, she their wrath beguiles
With her own sustenance; they relenting weep:
Such was this Festival, which from their isles
And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,
All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or creep,—

LVI

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore
Or poison none this festal did pollute,
But piled on high, an overflowing store
Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit,
Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet
Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute
Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set
In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

LVII

Laone had descended from the shrine,
And every deepest look and holiest mind
Fed on her form, though now those tones divine
Were silent as she passed; she did unwind
Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind
She mixed; some impulse made my heart refrain
From seeking her that night, so I reclined
Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain
A festal watchfire burned beside the dusky main.

LVIII

And joyous was our feast; pathetic talk,
And wit, and harmony of choral strains,
While far Orion o'er the waves did walk
That flow among the isles, held us in chains
Of sweet captivity, which none disdains
Who feels: but when his zone grew dim in mist
Which clothes the Ocean's bosom, o'er the plains
The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,
Which that delightful day with its own shadow blessed.

CANTO VI

I

Beside the dimness of the glimmering sea,
Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,
With that dear friend I lingered, who to me

So late had been restored, beneath the gleams
Of the silver stars; and ever in soft dreams
Of future love and peace sweet converse lapped
Our willing fancies, till the pallid beams
Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapped
The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapped;

II

And till we came even to the City's wall
And the great gate; then, none knew whence or why,
Disquiet on the multitudes did fall:
And first, one pale and breathless passed us by,
And stared and spoke not;—then with piercing cry
A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks
Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously
Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,
Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

III

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger
Resounded: and—'They come! to arms! to arms!
The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger
Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!'
In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms
Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept
Like waves before the tempest—these alarms
Came to me, as to know their cause I lept
On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief and scorn I wept!

IV

For to the North I saw the town on fire,
And its red light made morning pallid now,
Which burst over wide Asia;—louder, higher,
The yells of victory and the screams of woe
I heard approach, and saw the throng below
Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls
Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow
Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals
The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls.

V

And now the horsemen come—and all was done
Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld
Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.
I rushed among the rout, to have repelled
That miserable flight—one moment quelled
By voice and looks and eloquent despair,
As if reproach from their own hearts withheld
Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there
New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

VI

I strove, as, drifted on some cataract
By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive
Who hears its fatal roar:—the files compact
Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive
With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive
Their ranks with bloodier chasm:—into the plain
Disgorged at length the dead and the alive
In one dread mass, were parted, and the stain
Of blood, from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

VII

For now the despot's bloodhounds with their prey
Unarmed and unaware, were gorging deep
Their gluttony of death; the loose array
Of horsemen o'er the wide fields murdering sweep,
And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap
A harvest sown with other hopes, the while,
Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep
A killing rain of fire:—when the waves smile
As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano-isle,

VIII

Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread
For the carrion-fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—
I moved—I lived—as o'er the heaps of dead,
Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light
I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight,
But with loud cries of scorn which whoso heard
That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might
Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred,
And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

IX

A band of brothers gathering round me, made,
Although unarmed, a steadfast front, and still
Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade
Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill
With doubt even in success; deliberate will
Inspired our growing troop, not overthrown
It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,
And ever still our comrades were hewn down,
And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown.

X

Immovably we stood—in joy I found,
Beside me then, firm as a giant pine
Among the mountain-vapours driven around,
The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine
With a mild look of courage answered mine,

And my young friend was near, and ardently
His hand grasped mine a moment—now the line
Of war extended, to our rallying cry
As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

XI

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven
The horseman hewed our unarmed myriads down
Safely, though when by thirst of carnage driven
Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown
By hundreds leaping on them:—flesh and bone
Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft
Of the artillery from the sea was thrown
More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laughed
In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

XII

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,
So vast that phalanx of unconquered men,
And there the living in the blood did welter
Of the dead and dying, which, in that green glen,
Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen
Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged
While the sun clomb Heaven's eastern steep—but when
It 'gan to sink—a fiercer combat raged,
For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

XIII

Within a cave upon the hill were found
A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument
Of those who war but on their native ground
For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent
Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,
As those few arms the bravest and the best
Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present
A line which covered and sustained the rest,
A confident phalanx, which the foe on every side invest.

XIV

That onset turned the foes to flight almost;
But soon they saw their present strength, and knew
That coming night would to our resolute host
Bring victory; so dismounting, close they drew
Their glittering files, and then the combat grew
Unequal but most horrible;—and ever
Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,
Or the red sword, failed like a mountain-river
Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands for ever.

XV

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood,
To mutual ruin armed by one behind

Who sits and scoffs!—That friend so mild and good,
Who like its shadow near my youth had stood,
Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair
With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed
Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care,
And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

XVI

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst
I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell
O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st
For love. The ground in many a little dell
Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell
Alternate victory and defeat, and there
The combatants with rage most horrible
Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,
And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air,

XVII

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging;
Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest's swift Bane
When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—
Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;
And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain
Thou loathèd slave. I saw all shapes of death
And ministered to many, o'er the plain
While carnage in the sunbeam's warmth did seethe,
Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

XVIII

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm
Around me fought. At the decline of day
Winding above the mountain's snowy term
New banners shone: they quivered in the ray
Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array
Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands
I soon survived alone—and now I lay
Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands
I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands:

XIX

When on my foes a sudden terror came,
And they fled, scattering—lo! with reinless speed
A black Tartarian horse of giant frame
Comes trampling over the dead, the living bleed
Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,
On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,
Sate one waving a sword;—the hosts recede
And fly, as through their ranks with awful might,
Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright;

XX

And its path made a solitude.—I rose
And marked its coming: it relaxed its course
As it approached me, and the wind that flows
Through night, bore accents to mine ear whose force
Might create smiles in death—the Tartar horse
Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,
And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source
Of waters in the desert, as she said,
'Mount with me Laon, now!'—I rapidly obeyed.

XXI

Then: 'Away! away!' she cried, and stretched her sword
As 'twere a scourge over the courser's head,
And lightly shook the reins.—We spake no word,
But like the vapour of the tempest fled
Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread
Like the pine's locks upon the lingering blast;
Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread
Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,
As o'er their glimmering forms the steed's broad shadow passed.

XXII

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust,
His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray,
And turbulence, as of a whirlwind's gust
Surrounded us;—and still away! away!
Through the desert night we sped, while she alway
Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest,
Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray
Of the obscure stars gleamed;—its rugged breast
The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest.

XXIII

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:—
From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted
Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion
Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted
To music, by the wand of Solitude,
That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted
Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood
Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curvèd flood.

XXIV

One moment these were heard and seen—another
Passed; and the two who stood beneath that night,
Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other;
As from the lofty steed she did alight,
Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light

Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale
With influence strange of mournfullest delight,
My own sweet Cythna looked), with joy did quail,
And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.

XXV

And for a space in my embrace she rested,
Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,
While my faint arms her languid frame invested:
At length she looked on me, and half unclosing
Her tremulous lips, said: 'Friend, thy bands were losing
The battle, as I stood before the King
In bonds.—I burst them then, and swiftly choosing
The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring
Upon his horse, and, swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

XXVI

'Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer,
And we are here.'—Then turning to the steed,
She pressed the white moon on his front with pure
And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed
From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed;—
But I to a stone seat that Maiden led,
And kissing her fair eyes, said, 'Thou hast need
Of rest,' and I heaped up the courser's bed
In a green mossy nook, with mountain-flowers dispread.

XXVII

Within that ruin, where a shattered portal
Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now
By man, to be the home of things immortal,
Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,
And must inherit all he builds below,
When he is gone, a hall stood; o'er whose roof
Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow,
Clasping its gray rents with a verdurous woof,
A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

XXVIII

The autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made
A natural couch of leaves in that recess,
Which seasons none disturbed, but, in the shade
Of flowering parasites, did Spring love to dress
With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness
Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er
The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;
Whose intertwining fingers ever there
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

XXIX

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream
May pilot us through caverns strange and fair
Of far and pathless passion, while the stream

Of life, our bark doth on its whirlpools bear,
Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;
Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion
Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean
Of universal life, attuning its commotion.

XXX

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapped
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow
Of public hope was from our being snapped,
Though linkèd years had bound it there; for now
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below
All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,
Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,
Came on us, as we sate in silence there,
Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air:—

XXXI

In silence which doth follow talk that causes
The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,
When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses
Of inexpressive speech:—the youthful years
Which we together passed, their hopes and fears,
The blood itself which ran within our frames,
That likeness of the features which endears
The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,
And all the wingèd hours which speechless memory claims,

XXXII

Had found a voice—and ere that voice did pass,
The night grew damp and dim, and through a rent
Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass,
A wandering Meteor by some wild wind sent,
Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent
A faint and pallid lustre; while the song
Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent,
Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among;
A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

XXXIII

The Meteor showed the leaves on which we sate,
And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties
Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight
My neck near hers, her dark and deepening eyes,
Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies
O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,
Swam in our mute and liquid ecstasies,
Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses,
With their own fragrance pale, which Spring but half uncloses.

XXXIV

The Meteor to its far morass returned:
The beating of our veins one interval
Made still; and then I felt the blood that burned
Within her frame, mingle with mine, and fall
Around my heart like fire; and over all
A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep
And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall
Two disunited spirits when they leap
In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep.

XXXV

Was it one moment that confounded thus
All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one
Unutterable power, which shielded us
Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone
Into a wide and wild oblivion
Of tumult and of tenderness? or now
Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
The seasons, and mankind their changes know,
Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

XXXVI

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps
The failing heart in languishment, or limb
Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps
Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim
Through tears of a wide mist boundless and dim,
In one caress? What is the strong control
Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,
Where far over the world those vapours roll,
Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?

XXXVII

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,
But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,
Whose divine darkness fled not, from that green
And lone recess, where lapped in peace did lie
Our linkèd frames till, from the changing sky,
That night and still another day had fled;
And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,
And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread
Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering overhead.

XXXVIII

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,
Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,
And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn
O'er her pale bosom:—all within was still,
And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill

The depth of her unfathomable look;—
And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill,
The waves contending in its caverns strook,
For they foreknew the storm, and the gray ruin shook.

XXXIX

There we unheeding sate, in the communion
Of interchangèd vows, which, with a rite
Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.—
Few were the living hearts which could unite
Like ours, or celebrate a bridal-night
With such close sympathies, for they had sprung
From linkèd youth, and from the gentle might
Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long,
Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest, strong.

XL

And such is Nature's law divine, that those
Who grow together cannot choose but love,
If faith or custom do not interpose,
Or common slavery mar what else might move
All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove
Which shades the springs of Ethiopian Nile,
That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove
Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,
But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sunbeams smile;

XLI

And clings to them, when darkness may dissever
The close caresses of all duller plants
Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we for ever
Were linked, for love had nursed us in the haunts
Where knowledge, from its secret source enchants
Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing,
Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants,
As the great Nile feeds Egypt; ever flinging
Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

XLII

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were
Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell,
Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,—
And so we sate, until our talk befell
Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,
And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,
Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison: well,
For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,
But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

XLIII

Since she had food:—therefore I did awaken
The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane
Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,

Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,
Following me obediently; with pain
Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,
When lips and heart refuse to part again
Till they have told their fill, could scarce express
The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness,

XLIV

Cythna beheld me part, as I bestrode
That willing steed—the tempest and the night,
Which gave my path its safety as I rode
Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite
The darkness and the tumult of their might
Borne on all winds.—Far through the streaming rain
Floating at intervals the garments white
Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again
Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the plain.

XLV

I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he
Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red
Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly;
And when the earth beneath his tameless tread,
Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread
His nostrils to the blast, and joyously
Mock the fierce peal with neighings;—thus we sped
O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry
Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

XLVI

There was a desolate village in a wood
Whose bloom-inwoven leaves now scattering fed
The hungry storm; it was a place of blood,
A heap of hearthless walls;—the flames were dead
Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled
From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky
Flooded with lightning was ribbed overhead
By the black rafters, and around did lie
Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

XLVII

Beside the fountain in the market-place
Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare
With horny eyes upon each other's face,
And on the earth and on the vacant air,
And upon me, close to the waters where
I stooped to slake my thirst;—I shrank to taste,
For the salt bitterness of blood was there;
But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste
If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

XLVIII

No living thing was there beside one woman,
Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she
Was withered from a likeness of aught human
Into a fiend, by some strange misery:
Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,
And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed
With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,
And cried, 'Now, Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed
The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge the draught!

XLIX

'My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry,
Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—
When I came home, one in the blood did lie
Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other!
Since then I have no longer been a mother,
But I am Pestilence;—hither and thither
I flit about, that I may slay and smother:—
All lips which I have kissed must surely wither.
But Death's—if thou art he, we'll go to work together!

L

'What seek'st thou here? The moonlight comes in flashes,—
The dew is rising dankly from the dell—
'Twill moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes
In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell
First what thou seek'st.'—'I seek for food.'—''Tis well,
Thou shalt have food; Famine, my paramour,
Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell
Is Famine, but he drives not from his door
Those whom these lips have kissed, alone. No more, no more!'

LI

As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength
Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth
She led, and over many a corpse:—at length
We came to a lone hut where on the earth
Which made its floor, she in her ghastly mirth
Gathering from all those homes now desolate,
Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth
Among the dead—round which she set in state
A ring of cold, stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

LII

She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high
Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: 'Eat!
Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!'
And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet,
Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,

Mine eyes and my heart ached, and but that she
  Who loved me, did with absent looks defeat
Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;
But now I took the food that woman offered me;

LIII

And vainly having with her madness striven
  If I might win her to return with me,
Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven
  The lightning now grew pallid—rapidly,
  As by the shore of the tempestuous sea
The dark steed bore me, and the mountain gray
  Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see
Cythna among the rocks, where she alway
Had sate, with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day

LIV

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,
  Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast
My arms around her, lest her steps should fail
  As to our home we went, and thus embraced,
  Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste
Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind
  Trod peacefully along the mountain waste:
We reached our home ere morning could unbind
Night's latest veil, and on our bridal-couch reclined.

LV

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,
  And sweetest kisses past, we two did share
Our peaceful meal:—as an autumnal blossom
  Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,
  After cold showers, like rainbows woven there,
Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit
  Mantled, and in her eyes, an atmosphere
Of health, and hope; and sorrow languished near it,
And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

CANTO VII

I

So we sate joyous as the morning ray
  Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm
Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play
  Among the dewy weeds, the sun was warm,
  And we sate linked in the inwoven charm
Of converse and caresses sweet and deep,
  Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm
Time, though he wield the darts of death and sleep,
And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

II

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,
And how, awakened from that dreamy mood
By Liberty's uprise, the strength of gladness
Came to my spirit in my solitude;
And all that now I was—while tears pursued
Each other down her fair and listening cheek
Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood
From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,
Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

III

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,
Like broken memories of many a heart
Woven into one; to which no firm assurance,
So wild were they, could her own faith impart.
She said that not a tear did dare to start
From the swoln brain, and that her thoughts were firm
When from all mortal hope she did depart,
Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term,
And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

IV

One was she among many there, the thralls
Of the cold Tyrant's cruel lust: and they
Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;
But she was calm and sad, musing alway
On loftiest enterprise, till on a day
The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute
A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,
Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute
The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute.

V

Even when he saw her wondrous loveliness,
One moment to great Nature's sacred power
He bent, and was no longer passionless;
But when he bade her to his secret bower
Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore
Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
And mightier looks availed not; then he bore
Again his load of slavery, and became
A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

VI

She told me what a loathsome agony
Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,
Foul as in dream's most fearful imagery
To dally with the mowing dead—that night
All torture, fear, or horror made seem light

2877 dreams *ed. 1818.*

Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day
Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight
Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay
Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

VII

Her madness was a beam of light, a power
Which dawned through the rent soul; and words it gave,
Gestures, and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore
Which might not be withstood—whence none could save—
All who approached their sphere,—like some calm wave
Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;
And sympathy made each attendant slave
Fearless and free, and they began to breathe
Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

VIII

The King felt pale upon his noonday throne:
At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,—
One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown
From human shape into an instrument
Of all things ill—distorted, bowed and bent.
The other was a wretch from infancy
Made dumb by poison; who nought knew or meant
But to obey: from the fire-isles came he,
A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

IX

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke
Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,
Until upon their path the morning broke;
They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze,
The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades
Shakes with the sleepless surge;—the Ethiop there
Wound his long arms around her, and with knees
Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her
Among the closing waves out of the boundless air.

X

'Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain
Of morning light, into some shadowy wood,
He plunged through the green silence of the main,
Through many a cavern which the eternal flood
Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood;
And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,
And among mightier shadows which pursued
His heels, he wound: until the dark rocks under
He touched a golden chain—a sound arose like thunder.

XI

'A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling
Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven
As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:

And in that roof of crags a space was riven
Through which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,
Shot through the lines of many waves inwoven,
Like sunlight through acacia woods at even,
Through which, his way the diver having cloven,
Passed like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

XII

'And then,' she said, 'he laid me in a cave
Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,
A fountain round and vast, in which the wave
Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,
Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,
Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell
Like an hupaithric temple wide and high,
Whose aëry dome is inaccessible,
Was pierced with one round cleft through which the sunbeams fell.

XIII

'Below, the fountain's brink was richly paven
With the deep's wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand
Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven
With mystic legends by no mortal hand,
Left there, when thronging to the moon's command,
The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate
Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand
Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state
Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

XIV

'The fiend of madness which had made its prey
Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile:
There was an interval of many a day,
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while,
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,
And who, to be the gaoler had been taught
Of that strange dungeon; as a friend whose smile
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought.

XV

'The misery of a madness slow and creeping,
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,
And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping,
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there;
And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore
Thy mangled limbs for food!—Thus all things were
Transformed into the agony which I wore
Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom's core.

XVI

'Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing,
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air;
Another frenzy came—there seemed a being
Within me—a strange load my heart did bear,
As if some living thing had made its lair
Even in the fountains of my life:—a long
And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,
Then grew, like sweet reality among
Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

XVII

'Methought I was about to be a mother—
Month after month went by, and still I dreamed
That we should soon be all to one another,
I and my child; and still new pulses seemed
To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed
There was a babe within—and, when the rain
Of winter through the rifted cavern streamed,
Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,
I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.

XVIII

'It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,—
It was like thee, dear love, its eyes were thine,
Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth
It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine
Thine own, belovèd!—'twas a dream divine;
Even to remember how it fled, how swift,
How utterly, might make the heart repine,—
Though 'twas a dream.'—Then Cythna did uplift
Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift:

XIX

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness
Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears:
Which having passed, as one whom sobs oppress
She spoke: 'Yes, in the wilderness of years
Her memory, aye, like a green home appears;
She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,
For many months. I had no mortal fears;
Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—
It was a human thing which to my bosom clove.

XX

'I watched the dawn of her first smiles, and soon
When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,
Or when the beams of the invisible moon,
Or sun, from many a prism within the cave
Their gem-born shadows to the water gave,

2994 oppress *ed. 1818.*

Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,
From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,
She would mark one, and laugh, when that command
Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

XXI

'Methought her looks began to talk with me;
And no articulate sounds, but something sweet
Her lips would frame,—so sweet it could not be,
That it was meaningless; her touch would meet
Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat
In response while we slept; and on a day
When I was happiest in that strange retreat,
With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—
Both infants, weaving wings for time's perpetual way.

XXII

'Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown
Weary with joy, and tired with our delight,
We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down
On one fair mother's bosom:—from that night
She fled;—like those illusions clear and bright,
Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high
Pause ere it wakens tempest;—and her flight,
Though 'twas the death of brainless fantasy,
Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

XXIII

'It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver
Who brought me thither, came again, and bore
My child away. I saw the waters quiver,
When he so swiftly sunk, as once before:
Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,
But I was changed—the very life was gone
Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,
Day after day, and sitting there alone,
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

XXIV

'I was no longer mad, and yet methought
My breasts were swoln and changed:—in every vein
The blood stood still one moment, while that thought
Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain
It ebbed even to its withered springs again:
When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned
From that most strange delusion, which would fain
Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned
With more than human love,—then left it unreturned.

XXV

'So now my reason was restored to me
I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast
Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory

Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;
But all that cave and all its shapes, possessed
By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one
Some smile, some look, some gesture which had blessed
Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

XXVI

'Time passed, I know not whether months or years;
For day, nor night, nor change of seasons made
Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:
And I became at last even as a shade,
A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed,
Till it be thin as air; until, one even,
A Nautilus upon the fountain played,
Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven
Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

XXVII

'And, when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,
Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat,
Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing,
The Eagle, hovering o'er his prey did float;
But when he saw that I with fear did note
His purpose, proffering my own food to him,
The eager plumes subsided on his throat—
He came where that bright child of sea did swim,
And o'er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

XXVIII

'This wakened me, it gave me human strength;
And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,
But I resumed my ancient powers at length;
My spirit felt again like one of those
Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes
Of humankind their prey—what was this cave?
Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows
Immutable, resistless, strong to save,
Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

XXIX

'And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,
While that far dearer heart could move and be?
Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,
Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free,
Could I but win that friendly bird to me,
To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought
By intercourse of mutual imagery
Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;
But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.

XXX

'We live in our own world, and mine was made
From glorious fantasies of hope departed:
Aye we are darkened with their floating shade,
Or cast a lustre on them—time imparted
Such power to me—I became fearless-hearted,
My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,
And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted
Its lustre on all hidden things, behind
Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

XXXI

'My mind became the book through which I grew
Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,
Which like a mine I rifled through and through,
To me the keeping of its secrets gave—
One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,
Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,
And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;
Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.

XXXII

'And on the sand would I make signs to range
These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;
Clear, elemental shapes, whose smallest change
A subtler language within language wrought:
The key of truths which once were dimly taught
In old Crotona;—and sweet melodies
Of love, in that lorn solitude I caught
From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes
Shone through my sleep, and did that utterance harmonize.

XXXIII

'Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will,
As in a wingèd chariot, o'er the plain
Of crystal youth; and thou wert there to fill
My heart with joy, and there we sate again
On the gray margin of the glimmering main,
Happy as then but wiser far, for we
Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain
Fear, Faith, and Slavery; and mankind was free,
Equal, and pure, and wise, in Wisdom's prophecy.

XXXIV

'For to my will my fancies were as slaves
To do their sweet and subtile ministries;
And oft from that bright fountain's shadowy waves
They would make human throngs gather and rise
To combat with my overflowing eyes,

3115 lone solitude *ed. 1818.*

And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew
Familiar with the shock and the surprise
And war of earthly minds, from which I drew
The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.

XXXV

'And thus my prison was the populous earth—
Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn
Before the east has given its glory birth—
Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn
Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones uptorn,
And dwellings of mild people interspersed
With undivided fields of ripening corn,
And love made free,—a hope which we have nursed
Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

XXXVI

'All is not lost! There is some recompense
For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,
Even thronèd Evil's splendid impotence,
Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound
Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound
Of life and death passed fearlessly and well,
Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,
Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,
And what may else be good and irresistible.

XXXVII

'Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare
In storm-encompassed isles, we cherish yet
In this dark ruin—such were mine even there;
As in its sleep some odorous violet,
While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,
Breathes in prophetic dreams of day's uprise,
Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met
Spring's messengers descending from the skies,
The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

XXXVIII

'So years had passed, when sudden earthquake rent
The depth of ocean, and the cavern cracked
With sound, as if the world's wide continent
Had fallen in universal ruin wracked:
And through the cleft streamed in one cataract
The stifling waters—when I woke, the flood
Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked
Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode
Before me yawned—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

XXXIX

'Above me was the sky, beneath the sea:
I stood upon a point of shattered stone,
And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously

With splash and shock into the deep—anon
All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.
I felt that I was free! The Ocean-spray
Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone
Around, and in my hair the winds did play
Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way.

XL

'My spirit moved upon the sea like wind
Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,
Though it can wake the still cloud, and unbind
The strength of tempest: day was almost over,
When through the fading light I could discover
A ship approaching—its white sails were fed
With the north wind—its moving shade did cover
The twilight deep;—the Mariners in dread
Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

XLI

'And when they saw one sitting on a crag,
They sent a boat to me;—the Sailors rowed
In awe through many a new and fearful jag
Of overhanging rock, through which there flowed
The foam of streams that cannot make abode.
They came and questioned me, but when they heard
My voice, they became silent, and they stood
And moved as men in whom new love had stirred
Deep thoughts: so to the ship we passed without a word.

CANTO VIII

I

'I SATE beside the Steersman then, and gazing
Upon the west, cried, "Spread the sails! Behold!
The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing
Over the mountains yet;—the City of Gold
Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;
The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily
Beneath the stars, they tremble with the cold!
Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea!—
Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!"

II

'The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood
Aloof, and, whispering to the Pilot, said,
"Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued
By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead,
The night before we sailed, came to my bed
In dream, like that!" The Pilot then replied,
"It cannot be—she is a human Maid—
Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride,
Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside."

III

'We passed the islets, borne by wind and stream,
And as we sailed, the Mariners came near
And thronged around to listen;—in the gleam
Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear
May not attaint, and my calm voice did rear;
"Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light
To millions who the selfsame likeness wear,
Even while I speak—beneath this very night,
Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.

IV

'"What dream ye? Your own hands have built an home,
Even for yourselves on a beloved shore:
For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,
How they will greet him when his toils are o'er,
And laughing babes rush from the well-known door!
Is this your care? ye toil for your own good—
Ye feel and think—has some immortal power
Such purposes? or in a human mood,
Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude?

V

'"What is that Power? Ye mock yourselves, and give
A human heart to what ye cannot know:
As if the cause of life could think and live!
'Twere as if man's own works should feel, and show
The hopes, and fears, and thoughts from which they flow,
And he be like to them! Lo! Plague is free
To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,
Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity
Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny!

VI

'"What is that Power? Some moon-struck sophist stood
Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
His likeness in the world's vast mirror shown;
And 'twere an innocent dream, but that a faith
Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon,
And that men say, that Power has chosen Death
On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

VII

'"Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,
Or known from others who have known such things,
A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between
Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings,
Custom, domestic sway, ay, all that brings

Man's freeborn soul beneath the oppressor's heel,
Are his strong ministers, and that the stings
Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,
Though truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

VIII

'"And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;
Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!
And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among,
Will bind the wretch on whom is fixed a stain,
Which, like a plague, a burden, and a bane,
Clung to him while he lived;—for love and hate,
Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain—
The will of strength is right—this human state
Tyrants, that they may rule, with lies thus desolate.

IX

'"Alas, what strength? Opinion is more frail
Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon
Even while we gaze, though it awhile avail
To hide the orb of truth—and every throne
Of Earth or Heaven, though shadow, rests thereon,
One shape of many names:—for this ye plough
The barren waves of ocean, hence each one
Is slave or tyrant; all betray and bow,
Command, or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe.

X

'"Its names are each a sign which maketh holy
All power—ay, the ghost, the dream, the shade
Of power—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;
The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,
A law to which mankind has been betrayed;
And human love, is as the name well known
Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid
In bloody grave, and into darkness thrown,
Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own.

XI

'"O Love, who to the hearts of wandering men
Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves!
Justice, or Truth, or Joy! those only can
From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves
Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves.
To give to all an equal share of good,
To track the steps of Freedom, though through graves
She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,
To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend's dearest blood,—

XII

'"To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,
To own all sympathies, and outrage none,
And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,

Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,
To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,
To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe;
To live, as if to love and live were one,—
This is not faith or law, nor those who bow
To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

XIII

'"But children near their parents tremble now.
Because they must obey—one rules another,
And as one Power rules both high and low,
So man is made the captive of his brother,
And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother,
Above the Highest—and those fountain-cells,
Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,
Are darkened—Woman as the bond-slave dwells
Of man, a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells.

XIV

'"Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave
A lasting chain for his own slavery;—
In fear and restless care that he may live
He toils for others, who must ever be
The joyless thralls of like captivity;
He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin;
He builds the altar, that its idol's fee
May be his very blood; he is pursuing—
O, blind and willing wretch!—his own obscure undoing.

XV

'"Woman!—she is his slave, she has become
A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,
The outcast of a desolated home;
Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn
Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,
As calm decks the false Ocean:—well ye know
What Woman is, for none of Woman born,
Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,
Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

XVI

'"This need not be; ye might arise, and will
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary
With crime, be quenched and die.—Yon promontory
Even now eclipses the descending moon!—
Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like vapour—Man alone
Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

XVII

'"Let all be free and equal!—From your hearts
I feel an echo; through my inmost frame
Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts—
Whence come ye, friends? Alas, I cannot name
All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,
On your worn faces; as in legends old
Which make immortal the disastrous fame
Of conquerors and impostors false and bold,
The discord of your hearts, I in your looks behold.

XVIII

'"Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood
Forth on the earth? Or bring ye steel and gold,
That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?
Or from the famished poor, pale, weak, and cold,
Bear ye the earnings of their toil? Unfold!
Speak! Are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue
Stained freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?
Know yourselves thus! ye shall be pure as dew,
And I will be a friend and sister unto you.

XIX

'"Disguise it not—we have one human heart—
All mortal thoughts confess a common home:
Blush not for what may to thyself impart
Stains of inevitable crime: the doom
Is this, which has, or may, or must become
Thine, and all humankind's. Ye are the spoil
Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb,
Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil
Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

XX

'"Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate,
And Enmity is sister unto Shame;
Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—
Ah! it is dark with many a blazoned name
Of misery—all are mirrors of the same;
But the dark fiend who with his iron pen
Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame
Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men
Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his den.

XXI

'"Yes, it is Hate—that shapeless fiendly thing
Of many names, all evil, some divine,
Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;
Which, when the heart its snaky folds entwine
Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine

To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside
It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine
When Amphisbæna some fair bird has tied,
Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

XXII

'"Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,
Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.
It is the dark idolatry of self,
Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,
Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan;
O vacant expiation! Be at rest.—
The past is Death's, the future is thine own;
And love and joy can make the foulest breast
A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.

XXIII

'"Speak thou! whence come ye?"—A Youth made reply:
"Wearily, wearily o'er the boundless deep
We sail;—thou readest well the misery
Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep
Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,
Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow;
Even from our childhood have we learned to steep
The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,
And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now.

XXIV

'"Yes—I must speak—my secret should have perished
Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand
Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,
But that no human bosom can withstand
Thee, wondrous Lady, and the mild command
Of thy keen eyes:—yes, we are wretched slaves,
Who from their wonted loves and native land
Are reft, and bear o'er the dividing waves
The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

XXV

'"We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest
Among the daughters of those mountains lone,
We drag them there, where all things best and rarest
Are stained and trampled:—years have come and gone
Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known
No thought;—but now the eyes of one dear Maid
On mine with light of mutual love have shone—
She is my life,—I am but as the shade
Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

XXVI

'"For she must perish in the Tyrant's hall—
Alas, alas!"—He ceased, and by the sail
Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,

And still before the ocean and the gale
The ship fled fast till the stars 'gan to fail,
And, round me gathered with mute countenance,
The Seamen gazed, the Pilot, worn and pale
With toil, the Captain with gray locks, whose glance
Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

XXVII

'"Recede not! pause not now! Thou art grown old,
But Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth
Are children of one mother, even Love—behold!
The eternal stars gaze on us!—is the truth
Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth
For others' sufferings? do ye thirst to bear
A heart which not the serpent Custom's tooth
May violate?—Be free! and even here,
Swear to be firm till death!" They cried "We swear! We swear!"

XXVIII

'The very darkness shook, as with a blast
Of subterranean thunder, at the cry;
The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast
Into the night, as if the sea, and sky,
And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,
For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,
And on the deck, with unaccustomed eye
The captives gazing stood, and every one
Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone.

XXIX

'They were earth's purest children, young and fair,
With eyes the shrines of unawakened thought,
And brows as bright as Spring or Morning, ere
Dark time had there its evil legend wrought
In characters of cloud which wither not.—
The change was like a dream to them; but soon
They knew the glory of their altered lot,
In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,
Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

XXX

'But one was mute, her cheeks and lips most fair,
Changing their hue like lilies newly blown,
Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,
Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,
Showed that her soul was quivering; and full soon
That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look
On her and me, as for some speechless boon:
I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,
And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

CANTO IX

I

'That night we anchored in a woody bay,
And sleep no more around us dared to hover
Than, when all doubt and fear has passed away,
It shades the couch of some unresting lover,
Whose heart is now at rest: thus night passed over
In mutual joy:—around, a forest grew
Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover
The waning stars pranked in the waters blue,
And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

II

'The joyous Mariners, and each free Maiden,
Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,
With woodland spoil most innocently laden;
Soon wreaths of budding foliage seemed to flow
Over the mast and sails, the stern and prow
Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while
On the slant sun's path o'er the waves we go
Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle
Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

III

'The many ships spotting the dark blue deep
With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,
In fear and wonder; and on every steep
Thousands did gaze, they heard the startling cry,
Like Earth's own voice lifted unconquerably
To all her children, the unbounded mirth,
The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty!
They heard!—As o'er the mountains of the earth
From peak to peak leap on the beams of Morning's birth:

IV

'So from that cry over the boundless hills
Sudden was caught one universal sound,
Like a volcano's voice, whose thunder fills
Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found
A path through human hearts with stream which drowned
Its struggling fears and cares, dark Custom's brood;
They knew not whence it came, but felt around
A wide contagion poured—they called aloud
On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

V

'We reached the port.—Alas! from many spirits
The wisdom which had waked that cry, was fled,
Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits
From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,
Upon the night's devouring darkness shed:

Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm
Of fire, to burn the shrouds outworn and dead,
Which wrap the world; a wide enthusiasm,
To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake's spasm!

VI

'I walked through the great City then, but free
From shame or fear; those toil-worn Mariners
And happy Maidens did encompass me;
And like a subterranean wind that stirs
Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears
From every human soul, a murmur strange
Made as I passed: and many wept, with tears
Of joy and awe, and wingèd thoughts did range,
And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change.

VII

'For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid
Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—
As one who from some mountain's pyramid
Points to the unrisen sun!—the shades approve
His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.
Thus, gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill,—
Wisdom, the mail of tried affections wove
For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill,
Thrice steeped in molten steel the unconquerable will.

VIII

'Some said I was a maniac wild and lost;
Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave,
The Prophet's virgin bride, a heavenly ghost:—
Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave,
Who had stolen human shape, and o'er the wave,
The forest, and the mountain came;—some said
I was the child of God, sent down to save
Women from bonds and death, and on my head
The burden of their sins would frightfully be laid.

IX

'But soon my human words found sympathy
In human hearts: the purest and the best,
As friend with friend, made common cause with me,
And they were few, but resolute;—the rest,
Ere yet success the enterprise had blessed,
Leagued with me in their hearts;—their meals, their slumber,
Their hourly occupations, were possessed
By hopes which I had armed to overnumber
Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings encumber.

X

'But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken
From their cold, careless, willing slavery,
Sought me: one truth their dreary prison has shaken,—

They looked around, and lo! they became free!
Their many tyrants sitting desolately
In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain;
For wrath's red fire had withered in the eye,
Whose lightning once was death,—nor fear, nor gain
Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

XI

'Those who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt
Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped them round,
Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt
In the white furnace; and a visioned swound,
A pause of hope and awe the City bound,
Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,
When in its awful shadow it has wound
The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,
Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leaped forth.

XII

'Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,
By winds from distant regions meeting there,
In the high name of truth and liberty,
Around the City millions gathered were,
By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair,—
Words which the lore of truth in hues of flame
Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air
Like homeless odours floated, and the name
Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame.

XIII

'The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,
The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—
That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,
And whatsoe'er, when force is impotent,
To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,
Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.
Therefore throughout the streets, the Priests he sent
To curse the rebels.—To their gods did they
For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way.

XIV

'And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell
From seats where law is made the slave of wrong,
How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,
Because her sons were free,—and that among
Mankind, the many to the few belong,
By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.
They said, that age was truth, and that the young
Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,
With which old times and men had quelled the vain and free.

3573 hues of grace *ed. 1818.*

XV

'And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips
They breathed on the enduring memory
Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse;
There was one teacher, who necessity
Had armed with strength and wrong against mankind,
His slave and his avenger aye to be;
That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,
And that the will of one was peace, and we
Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery—

XVI

'"For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter."
So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied;
Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter
Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride
Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide;
And yet obscener slaves with smoother brow,
And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue and wide,
Said, that the rule of men was over now,
And hence, the subject world to woman's will must bow;

XVII

'And gold was scattered through the streets, and wine
Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall.
In vain! the steady towers in Heaven did shine
As they were wont, nor at the priestly call
Left Plague her banquet in the Ethiop's hall,
Nor Famine from the rich man's portal came,
Where at her ease she ever preys on all
Who throng to kneel for food: nor fear nor shame,
Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope's newly kindled flame.

XVIII

'For gold was as a god whose faith began
To fade, so that its worshippers were few,
And Faith itself, which in the heart of man
Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew
Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,
Till the Priests stood alone within the fane;
The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew,
And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,
The union of the free with discord's brand to stain.

XIX

'The rest thou knowest.—Lo! we two are here—
We have survived a ruin wide and deep—
Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve or fear,
Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep
I smile, though human love should make me weep.

We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,
And I do feel a mighty calmness creep
Over my heart, which can no longer borrow
Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

XX

'We know not what will come—yet Laon, dearest,
Cythna shall be the prophetess of Love,
Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,
To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove
Within the homeless Future's wintry grove;
For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem
Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,
And violence and wrong are as a dream
Which rolls from steadfast truth, an unreturning stream.

XXI

'The blasts of Autumn drive the wingèd seeds
Over the earth,—next come the snows, and rain,
And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter leads
Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;
Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,
Shedding soft dews from her ethereal wings;
Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,
And music on the waves and woods she flings,
And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

XXII

'O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness
Wind-wingèd emblem! brightest, best and fairest!
Whence comest thou, when, with dark Winter's sadness
The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest?
Sister of joy, thou art the child who wearest
Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet;
Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest
Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,
Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

XXIII

'Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,
Surround the world.—We are their chosen slaves.
Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven
Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves?
Lo, Winter comes!—the grief of many graves,
The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,
The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves
Stagnate like ice at Faith the enchanter's word,
And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorred.

XXIV

'The seeds are sleeping in the soil: meanwhile
The Tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey,
Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile

Because they cannot speak; and, day by day,
The moon of wasting Science wanes away
Among her stars, and in that darkness vast
The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,
And gray Priests triumph, and like blight or blast
A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

XXV

'This is the winter of the world;—and here
We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,
Expiring in the frore and foggy air.—
Behold! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made
The promise of its birth,—even as the shade
Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings
The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed
As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,
From its dark gulf of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

XXVI

'O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold
Before this morn may on the world arise;
Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?
Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes
On thine own heart—it is a paradise
Which everlasting Spring has made its own,
And while drear Winter fills the naked skies,
Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh-blown,
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

XXVII

'In their own hearts the earnest of the hope
Which made them great, the good will ever find;
And though some envious shades may interlope
Between the effect and it, One comes behind,
Who aye the future to the past will bind—
Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever
Evil with evil, good with good must wind
In bands of union, which no power may sever:
They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

XXVIII

'The good and mighty of departed ages
Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
Who leave the vesture of their majesty
To adorn and clothe this naked world;—and we
Are like to them—such perish, but they leave
All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

XXIX

'So be the turf heaped over our remains
  Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,
Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins
  The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought
  Pass from our being, or be numbered not
Among the things that are; let those who come
  Behind, for whom our steadfast will has bought
A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,
Insult with careless tread, our undivided tomb.

XXX

'Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
  Our happiness, and all that we have been,
Immortally must live, and burn and move,
  When we shall be no more;—the world has seen
  A type of peace; and—as some most serene
And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye,
  After long years, some sweet and moving scene
Of youthful hope, returning suddenly,
Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

XXXI

'And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us,
  As worms devour the dead, and near the throne
And at the altar, most accepted thus
  Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done/
  None shall dare vouch, though it be truly known;
That record shall remain, when they must pass
  Who built their pride on its oblivion;
And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,
Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

XXXII

'The while we two, belovèd, must depart,
  And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair,
Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart
  That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:
  These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems darkly there
To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep
  Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,
Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep
In joy;—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

XXXIII

'These are blind fancies—reason cannot know
  What sense can neither feel, nor thought conceive;
There is delusion in the world—and woe,
  And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live,
  Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give

Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,
Or even these thoughts.—Come near me! I do weave
A chain I cannot break—I am possessed
With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human breast.

XXXIV

'Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—
O! willingly, belovèd, would these eyes,
Might they no more drink being from thy form,
Even as to sleep whence we again arise,
Close their faint orbs in death: I fear nor prize
Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—
Yes, Love when Wisdom fails makes Cythna wise:
Darkness and death, if death be true, must be
Dearer than life and hope, if unenjoyed with thee.

XXXV

'Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters
Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven,
The Ocean and the Sun, the Clouds their daughters,
Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,
All that we are or know, is darkly driven
Towards one gulf.—Lo! what a change is come
Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,
Though it change all but thee!'—She ceased—night's gloom
Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky's sunless dome.

XXXVI

Though she had ceased, her countenance uplifted
To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright;
Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted
The air they breathed with love, her locks undight.
'Fair star of life and love,' I cried, 'my soul's delight,
Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies?
O, that my spirit were yon Heaven of night,
Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes!'
She turned to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise!

CANTO X

I

Was there a human spirit in the steed,
That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,
He broke our linkèd rest? or do indeed
All living things a common nature own,
And thought erect an universal throne,
Where many shapes one tribute ever bear?
And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan
To see her sons contend? and makes she bare
Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share?

II

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue
Which was not human—the lone nightingale
Has answered me with her most soothing song,
Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale
With grief, and sighed beneath; from many a dale
The antelopes who flocked for food have spoken
With happy sounds, and motions, that avail
Like man's own speech; and such was now the token
Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken.

III

Each night, that mighty steed bore me abroad,
And I returned with food to our retreat,
And dark intelligence; the blood which flowed
Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet;
Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew,—then meet
The vulture, and the wild dog, and the snake,
The wolf, and the hyæna gray, and eat
The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make
Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

IV

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring
The banded slaves whom every despot sent
At that throned traitor's summons; like the roaring
Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent
In the scorched pastures of the South; so bent
The armies of the leaguèd Kings around
Their files of steel and flame;—the continent
Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound,
Beneath their feet, the sea shook with their Navies' sound.

V

From every nation of the earth they came,
The multitude of moving heartless things,
Whom slaves call men: obediently they came,
Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings
To the stall, red with blood; their many kings
Led them, thus erring, from their native land;
Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

VI

Fertile in prodigies and lies;—so there
Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.
The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear
His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will
Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill

3834 native home *ed. 1818.*

Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure;
But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,
And savage sympathy: those slaves impure,
Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

VII

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe
His countenance in lies,—even at the hour
When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,
With secret signs from many a mountain-tower,
With smoke by day, and fire by night, the power
Of Kings and Priests, those dark conspirators,
He called:—they knew his cause their own, and swore
Like wolves and serpents to their mutual wars
Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven abhors.

VIII

Myriads had come—millions were on their way;
The Tyrant passed, surrounded by the steel
Of hired assassins, through the public way,
Choked with his country's dead:—his footsteps reel
On the fresh blood—he smiles. 'Ay, now I feel
I am a King in truth!' he said, and took
His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel
Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,
And scorpions; that his soul on its revenge might look.

IX

'But first, go slay the rebels—why return
The victor bands?' he said, 'millions yet live,
Of whom the weakest with one word might turn
The scales of victory yet;—let none survive
But those within the walls—each fifth shall give
The expiation for his brethren here.—
Go forth, and waste and kill!'—'O king, forgive
My speech,' a soldier answered—'but we fear
The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near;

X

'For we were slaying still without remorse,
And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand
Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,
An Angel bright as day, waving a brand
Which flashed among the stars, passed.'—'Dost thou stand
Parleying with me, thou wretch?' the king replied;
'Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band,
Whoso will drag that woman to his side
That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside;

XI

'And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth!'
They rushed into the plain.—Loud was the roar
Of their career: the horsemen shook the earth;

The wheeled artillery's speed the pavement tore;
The infantry, file after file, did pour
Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew
Among the wasted fields; the sixth saw gore
Stream through the city; on the seventh, the dew
Of slaughter became stiff, and there was peace anew:

XII

Peace in the desert fields and villages,
Between the glutted beasts and mangled dead!
Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries
Of victims to their fiery judgement led,
Made pale their voiceless lips who seemed to dread
Even in their dearest kindred, lest some tongue
Be faithless to the fear yet unbetrayed;
Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng
Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song!

XIII

Day after day the burning sun rolled on
Over the death-polluted land—it came
Out of the east like fire, and fiercely shone
A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame
The few lone ears of corn;—the sky became
Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast
Languished and died,—the thirsting air did claim
All moisture, and a rotting vapour passed
From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

XIV

First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food
Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.
Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood
Had lured, or who, from regions far away,
Had tracked the hosts in festival array,
From their dark deserts; gaunt and wasting now,
Stalked like fell shades among their perished prey;
In their green eyes a strange disease did glow,
They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

XV

The fish were poisoned in the streams; the birds
In the green woods perished; the insect race
Was withered up; the scattered flocks and herds
Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chase
Died moaning, each upon the other's face
In helpless agony gazing; round the City
All night, the lean hyaenas their sad case
Like starving infants wailed; a woeful ditty!
And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

XVI

Amid the aëreal minarets on high,
The Ethiopian vultures fluttering fell
From their long line of brethren in the sky,
Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too well
These signs the coming mischief did foretell:—
Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread
Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,
A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread
With the quick glance of eyes, like withering lightnings shed.

XVII

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts
Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare;
So on those strange and congregated hosts
Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air
Groaned with the burden of a new despair;
Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter
Feeds from her thousand breasts, though sleeping there
With lidless eyes, lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,
A ghastly brood; conceived of Lethe's sullen water.

XVIII

There was no food, the corn was trampled down,
The flocks and herds had perished; on the shore
The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown;
The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more
Creaked with the weight of birds, but, as before
Those wingèd things sprang forth, were void of shade;
The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,
Were burned;—so that the meanest food was weighed
With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

XIX

There was no corn—in the wide market-place
All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold;
They weighed it in small scales—and many a face
Was fixed in eager horror then: his gold
The miser brought; the tender maid, grown bold
Through hunger, bared her scornèd charms in vain;
The mother brought her eldest-born, controlled
By instinct blind as love, but turned again
And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

XX

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.
'O, for the sheathèd steel, so late which gave
Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran
With brothers' blood! O, that the earthquake's grave
Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!'

3967 earthquakes *ed. 1818.*

Vain cries—throughout the streets, thousands pursued
  Each by his fiery torture howl and rave,
Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,
Upon fresh heaps of dead; a ghastly multitude.

XXI

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well
  Was choked with rotting corpses, and became
A cauldron of green mist made visible
  At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,
  Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,
Which raged like poison through their bursting veins;
  Naked they were from torture, without shame,
Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains,
Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

XXII

It was not thirst but madness! Many saw
  Their own lean image everywhere, it went
A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe
  Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent
  Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,
Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed
  Contagion on the sound; and others rent
Their matted hair, and cried aloud, 'We tread
On fire! the avenging Power his hell on earth has spread!'

XXIII

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid.
  Near the great fountain in the public square,
Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid
  Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer
  For life, in the hot silence of the air;
And strange 'twas, amid that hideous heap to see
  Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,
As if not dead, but slumbering quietly
Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

XXIV

Famine had spared the palace of the king:—
  He rioted in festival the while,
He and his guards and priests; but Plague did fling
  One shadow upon all. Famine can smile
  On him who brings it food, and pass, with guile
Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier gray,
  The house-dog of the throne; but many a mile
Comes Plague, a wingèd wolf, who loathes alway
The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

XXV

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast,
  Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight
To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased

That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might
Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night
In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes; he fell
Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright
Among the guests, or raving mad, did tell
Strange truths; a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

XXVI

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror;
That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind,
Fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error,
On their own hearts: they sought and they could find
No refuge—'twas the blind who led the blind!
So, through the desolate streets to the high fane,
The many-tongued and endless armies wind
In sad procession: each among the train
To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

XXVII

'O God!' they cried, 'we know our secret pride
Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name;
Secure in human power we have defied
Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame
Before thy presence; with the dust we claim
Kindred; be merciful, O King of Heaven!
Most justly have we suffered for thy fame
Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,
Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven.

XXVIII

'O King of Glory! thou alone hast power!
Who can resist thy will? who can restrain
Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower
The shafts of thy revenge, a blistering rain?
Greatest and best, be merciful again!
Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made
The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,
Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid
Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works have weighed?

XXIX

'Well didst thou loosen on this impious City
Thine angels of revenge: recall them now;
Thy worshippers, abased, here kneel for pity,
And bind their souls by an immortal vow:
We swear by thee! and to our oath do thou
Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,
That we will kill with fire and torments slow,
The last of those who mocked thy holy name,
And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim.'

XXX

Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips
Worshipped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,
Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse
The light of other minds;—troubled they passed
From the great Temple;—fiercely still and fast
The arrows of the plague among them fell,
And they on one another gazed aghast,
And through the hosts contention wild befell,
As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

XXXI

And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,
Moses and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,
A tumult of strange names, which never met
Before, as watchwords of a single woe,
Arose; each raging votary 'gan to throw
Aloft his armèd hands, and each did howl
'Our God alone is God!'—and slaughter now
Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl
A voice came forth, which pierced like ice through every soul.

XXXII

'Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came,
A zealous man, who led the legioned West,
With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,
To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest
Even to his friends was he, for in his breast
Did hate and guile lie watchful, intertwined,
Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;
He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined
To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind.

XXXIII

But more he loathed and hated the clear light
Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear,
Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night,
Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near
Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear
That faith and tyranny were trampled down;
Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share
The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,
The priests his children drag for slaves to serve their own.

XXXIV

He dared not kill the infidels with fire
Or steel, in Europe; the slow agonies
Of legal torture mocked his keen desire:
So he made truce with those who did despise
The expiation, and the sacrifice,
That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed
Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;
For fear of God did in his bosom breed
A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

XXXV

‘Peace! Peace!’ he cried, ‘when we are dead, the Day
Of Judgement comes, and all shall surely know
Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay
The errors of his faith in endless woe!
But there is sent a mortal vengeance now
On earth, because an impious race had spurned
Him whom we all adore,—a subtle foe,
By whom for ye this dread reward was earned,
And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

XXXVI

‘Think ye, because ye weep, and kneel, and pray,
That God will lull the pestilence? It rose
Even from beneath his throne, where, many a day,
His mercy soothed it to a dark repose:
It walks upon the earth to judge his foes;
And what are thou and I, that he should deign
To curb his ghastly minister, or close
The gates of death, ere they receive the twain
Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign?

XXXVII

‘Ay, there is famine in the gulf of hell,
Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn.—
Their lurid eyes are on us! those who fell
By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn,
Are in their jaws! they hunger for the spawn
Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent
To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn
Like dogs, and they will sleep with luxury spent,
When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent!

XXXVIII

‘Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep:—
Pile high the pyre of expiation now,
A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap
Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,
When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,
A stream of clinging fire,—and fix on high
A net of iron, and spread forth below
A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry
Of centipedes and worms, earth's hellish progeny!

XXXIX

‘Let Laon and Laone on that pyre,
Linked tight with burning brass, perish!—then pray
That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire
Of Heaven may be appeased.’ He ceased, and they
A space stood silent, as far, far away

The echoes of his voice among them died;
And he knelt down upon the dust, alway
Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,
Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

XL

His voice was like a blast that burst the portal
Of fabled hell; and as he spake, each one
Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,
And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne
Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone
Their King and Judge—fear killed in every breast
All natural pity then, a fear unknown
Before, and with an inward fire possessed,
They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

XLI

'Twas morn.—At noon the public crier went forth,
Proclaiming through the living and the dead,
'The Monarch saith, that his great Empire's worth
Is set on Laon and Laone's head:
He who but one yet living here can lead,
Or who the life from both their hearts can wring,
Shall be the kingdom's heir, a glorious meed!
But he who both alive can hither bring,
The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King.'

XLII

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron
Was spread above, the fearful couch below;
It overtopped the towers that did environ
That spacious square; for Fear is never slow
To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,
So, she scourged forth the maniac multitude
To rear this pyramid—tottering and slow,
Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued
By gadflies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood.

XLIII

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.
Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation
Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb
Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation;
And in the silence of that expectation,
Was heard on high the reptiles' hiss and crawl—
It was so deep—save when the devastation
Of the swift pest, with fearful interval,
Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fall.

XLIV

Morn came,—among those sleepless multitudes,
Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still
Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods

4176 reptiles'] reptiles *ed. 1818.*

The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill
Earth's cold and sullen brooks; in silence, still
The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear
Of Hell became a panic, which did kill
Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,
As 'Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine hour is near!'

XLV

And Priests rushed through their ranks, some counterfeiting
The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed
With their own lies; they said their god was waiting
To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—
And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need
Of human souls:—three hundred furnaces
Soon blazed through the wide City, where, with speed,
Men brought their infidel kindred to appease
God's wrath, and while they burned, knelt round on quivering knees.

XLVI

The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,
The winds of eve dispersed those ashes gray.
The madness which these rites had lulled, awoke
Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say
The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh
In balance just the good and evil there?
He might man's deep and searchless heart display,
And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where
Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

XLVII

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,
To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,
And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,
Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead,
Looked from their meal, and saw an Angel tread
The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she!
And, on that night, one without doubt or dread
Came to the fire, and said, 'Stop, I am he!
Kill me!'—They burned them both with hellish mockery.

XLVIII

And, one by one, that night, young maidens came,
Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone
Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame
Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,
And sung a low sweet song, of which alone
One word was heard, and that was Liberty;
And that some kissed their marble feet, with moan
Like love, and died; and then that they did die
With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

CANTO XI

I

She saw me not—she heard me not—alone
Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;
She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown
Over her look, the shadow of a mood
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,
A thought of voiceless depth;—she stood alone,
Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood
Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown
Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead shone.

II

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying
Gray mists poured forth from the unresting fountains
Of darkness in the North:—the day was dying:—
Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,
And on the shattered vapours, which defying
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

III

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,
Its waves gushed forth like fire, and as if swayed
By some mute tempest, rolled on *her*; the shade
Of her bright image floated on the river
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver;
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

IV

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth;
Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
From common joy; which with the speechless feeling
That led her there united, and shot forth
From her far eyes a light of deep revealing,
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

V

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
Was now heard there;—her dark and intricate eyes
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,
Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,

Burst from her looks and gestures;—and a light
Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise
From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite
Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

VI

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame;
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame
Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid
Upon my languid heart her dearest head;
I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet;
Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed
My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet
I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

VII

Never but once to meet on Earth again!
She heard me as I fled—her eager tone
Sunk on my heart, and almost wove a chain
Around my will to link it with her own,
So that my stern resolve was almost gone.
'I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly?
My steps are faint—Come back, thou dearest one—
Return, ah me! return!'—The wind passed by
On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

VIII

Woe! Woe! that moonless midnight!—Want and Pest
Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,
As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest
Eminent among those victims—even the Fear
Of Hell: each girt by the hot atmosphere
Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung
By his own rage upon his burning bier
Of circling coals of fire; but still there clung
One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

IX

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest;
Not life—it was despair to be!—not sleep,
For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossessed
All natural dreams: to wake was not to weep,
But to gaze mad and pallid, at the leap
To which the Future, like a snaky scourge.
Or like some tyrant's eye, which aye doth keep
Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge
Their steps; they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous surge.

X

Each of that multitude, alone, and lost
To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew;
As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tossed

Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew
Whilst now the ship is splitting through and through;
Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,
Started from sick despair, or if there flew
One murmur on the wind, or if some word
Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

XI

Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death,
Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.
Why watched those myriads with suspended breath
Sleepless a second night? they are not here,
The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,
Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead;
And even in death their lips are wreathed with fear.—
The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead
Silent Arcturus shines—'Ha! hear'st thou not the tread

XII

'Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,
Of triumph not to be contained? See! hark!
They come, they come! give way!' Alas, ye deem
Falsely—'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark
Driven, like a troop of spectres, through the dark,
From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,
A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark
From its blue train, and spreading widely, clung
To their wild hair, like mist the topmost pines among.

XIII

And many, from the crowd collected there,
Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies;
There was the silence of a long despair,
When the last echo of those terrible cries
Came from a distant street, like agonies
Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne
All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes
In stony expectation fixed; when one
Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

XIV

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him
With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest
Concealed his face; but, when he spake, his tone,
Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,—
Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast
Void of all hate or terror—made them start;
For as with gentle accents he addressed
His speech to them, on each unwilling heart
Unusual awe did fall—a spirit-quelling dart.

4321 wreathed] writhed. *Poetical Works, 1839*, 1st ed.

XV

'Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast
Amid the ruin which yourselves have made,
Yes, Desolation heard your trumpet's blast,
And sprang from sleep!—dark Terror has obeyed
Your bidding—O, that I whom ye have made
Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free
From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade,
Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be
The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

XVI

'Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress;
Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise,
Who, if ye dared, might not aspire to less
Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies
Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries
To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought,
An empty and a cruel sacrifice
Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought
Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

XVII

'Ye seek for happiness—alas, the day!
Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,
Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
Severe taskmistress! ye your hearts have sold.
Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream
No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold
And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

XVIII

'Fear not the future, weep not for the past.
O, could I win your ears to dare be now
Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast
Into the dust those symbols of your woe,
Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go
Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,
That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;
And that mankind is free, and that the shame
Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame!

XIX

'If thus, 'tis well—if not, I come to say
That Laon—' while the Stranger spoke, among
The Council sudden tumult and affray
Arose, for many of those warriors young,
Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung

4361 the mighty] tho' mighty *ed. 1818.* 4362 ye] he *ed. 1818.*

Like bees on mountain-flowers; they knew the truth,
And from their thrones in vindication sprung;
The men of faith and law then without ruth
Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth.

XX

They stabbed them in the back and sneered—a slave
Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew
Each to its bloody, dark, and secret grave;
And one more daring raised his steel anew
To pierce the Stranger. 'What hast thou to do
With me, poor wretch?'—Calm, solemn, and severe,
That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw
His dagger on the ground, and pale with fear,
Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

XXI

'It doth avail not that I weep for ye—
Ye cannot change, since ye are old and gray,
And ye have chosen your lot—your fame must be
A book of blood, whence in a milder day
Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapped in clay:
Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend,
And him to your revenge will I betray,
So ye concede one easy boon. Attend!
For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

XXII

'There is a People mighty in its youth,
A land beyond the Oceans of the West,
Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth
Are worshipped; from a glorious Mother's breast,
Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest
Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,
By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed,
Turns to her chainless child for succour now,
It draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

XXIII

'That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
Of sunrise gleams when Earth is wrapped in gloom;
An epitaph of glory for the tomb
Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,
Great People! as the sands shalt thou become;
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

XXIV

'Yes, in the desert there is built a home
For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear
The monuments of man beneath the dome

4432 there] then *ed. 1818.*

Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there,
Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,
Drive from their wasted homes: the boon I pray
Is this—that Cythna shall be convoyed there—
Nay, start not at the name—America!
And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

XXV

'With me do what you will. I am your foe!'
The light of such a joy as makes the stare
Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow,
Shone in a hundred human eyes—'Where, where
Is Laon? Haste! fly! drag him swiftly here!
We grant thy boon.'—'I put no trust in ye,
Swear by the Power ye dread.'—'We swear, we swear!'
The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,
And smiled in gentle pride, and said, Lo! I am he!'

CANTO XII

I

The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying
Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness
The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,
Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope
Closed their faint eyes; from house to house replying
With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,
And filled the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

II

Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array
Of guards in golden arms, and Priests beside,
Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray
The blackness of the faith it seems to hide;
And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide
Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—
A Shape of light is sitting by his side,
A child most beautiful. I' the midst appears
Laon,—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

III

His head and feet are bare, his hands are bound
Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak
Their scoffs on him, though myriads throng around;
There are no sneers upon his lip which speak
That scorn or hate has made him bold; his cheek
Resolve has not turned pale,—his eyes are mild
And calm, and, like the morn about to break,
Smile on mankind—his heart seems reconciled
To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

IV

Tumult was in the soul of all beside,
Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those who saw
Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide
Into their brain, and became calm with awe.—
See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw.
A thousand torches in the spacious square,
Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,
Await the signal round: the morning fair
Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare.

V

And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,
Upon a platform level with the pile,
The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,
Girt by the chieftains of the host; all smile
In expectation, but one child: the while
I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier
Of fire, and look around: each distant isle
Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near,
Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

VI

There was such silence through the host, as when
An earthquake trampling on some populous town,
Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men
Expect the second; all were mute but one,
That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone
Stood up before the King, without avail,
Pleading for Laon's life—her stifled groan
Was heard—she trembled like one aspen pale
Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

VII

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun,
Among those reptiles, stingless with delay,
Even like a tyrant's wrath?—The signal-gun
Roared—hark, again! In that dread pause he lay
As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—
A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last
Bursts on that awful silence; far away,
Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,
Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

VIII

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear
Has startled the triumphant!—they recede!
For ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear
The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed
Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,

Bursts through their ranks: a woman sits thereon,
Fairer, it seems, than aught that earth can breed,
Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,
A spirit from the caves of daylight wandering gone.

IX

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep
The lingering guilty to their fiery grave;
The Tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,—
Her innocence his child from fear did save;
Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave
Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,
And, like the refluence of a mighty wave
Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude
With crushing panic, fled in terror's altered mood.

X

They pause, they blush, they gaze,—a gathering shout
Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams
Of a tempestuous sea:—that sudden rout
One checked, who, never in his mildest dreams
Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams
Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed
Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems
That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed
Inly for self—thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed,

XI

And others too, thought he was wise to see,
In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine;
In love and beauty, no divinity.—
Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine
Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,
He said, and the persuasion of that sneer
Rallied his trembling comrades—'Is it mine
To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear
A woman? Heaven has sent its other victim here.'

XII

'Were it not impious,' said the King, 'to break
Our holy oath?'—'Impious to keep it, say!'
Shrieked the exulting Priest—'Slaves, to the stake
Bind her, and on my head the burden lay
Of her just torments:—at the Judgement Day
Will I stand up before the golden throne
Of Heaven, and cry, "To thee did I betray
An Infidel; but for me she would have known
Another moment's joy! the glory be thine own!"'

XIII

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,
Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprung
From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade

Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among
Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung
Upon his neck, and kissed his moonèd brow.
A piteous sight, that one so fair and young,
The clasp of such a fearful death should woo
With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

XIV

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear
From many a tremulous eye, but like soft dews
Which feed Spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,
Frozen by doubt,—alas! they could not choose
But weep; for when her faint limbs did refuse
To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled;
And with her eloquent gestures, and the hues
Of her quick lips, even as a weary child
Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,

XV

She won them, though unwilling, her to bind
Near me, among the snakes. When there had fled
One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,
She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,
But each upon the other's countenance fed
Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil
Which doth divide the living and the dead
Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,—
All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

XVI

Yet—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam
Of dying flames, the stainless air around
Hung silent and serene—a blood-red gleam
Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground
The globèd smoke,—I heard the mighty sound
Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean;
And through its chasms I saw, as in a swound,
The tyrant's child fall without life or motion
Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.

XVII

And is this death?—The pyre has disappeared,
The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng;
The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard
The music of a breath-suspending song,
Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,
Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep;
With ever-changing notes it floats along,
Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep
A melody, like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

4577 there] then *ed. 1818.*

XVIII

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand
Wakened me then; lo! Cythna sate reclined
Beside me, on the waved and golden sand
Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined
With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind
Breathed divine odour; high above, was spread
The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,
Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead
A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

XIX

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain
With incense-bearing forests, and vast caves
Of marble radiance, to that mighty fountain;
And where the flood its own bright margin laves,
Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,
Which, from the depths whose jaggèd caverns breed
Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,—
Till through a chasm of hills they roll, and feed
A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed.

XX

As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder,
A boat approached, borne by the musical air
Along the waves which sung and sparkled under
Its rapid keel—a wingèd shape sate there,
A child with silver-shining wings, so fair,
That as her bark did through the waters glide,
The shadow of the lingering waves did wear
Light, as from starry beams; from side to side,
While veering to the wind her plumes the bark did guide.

XXI

The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl,
Almost translucent with the light divine
Of her within; the prow and stern did curl
Hornèd on high, like the young moon supine,
When o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,
It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams,
Whose golden waves in many a purple line
Fade fast, till borne on sunlight's ebbing streams,
Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

XXII

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;—
Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes
Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet
Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,
Glanced as she spake: 'Ay, this is Paradise

And not a dream, and we are all united!
  Lo, that is mine own child, who in the guise 4645
Of madness came, like day to one benighted
In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!'

XXIII

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms
  Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair
Than her own human hues and living charms; 4650
  Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,
  Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,
Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight;
  The glossy darkness of her streaming hair
Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapped from sight 4655
The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

XXIV

Then the bright child, the plumèd Seraph came,
  And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,
And said, 'I was disturbed by tremulous shame
  When once we met, yet knew that I was thine 4660
  From the same hour in which thy lips divine
Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,
  Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine
Thine image with *her* memory dear—again
We meet; exempted now from mortal fear or pain. 4665

XXV

'When the consuming flames had wrapped ye round,
  The hope which I had cherished went away;
I fell in agony on the senseless ground,
  And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray
  My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,
The Spectre of the Plague before me flew, 4671
  And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,
"They wait for thee, belovèd!"—then I knew
The death-mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

XXVI

'It was the calm of love—for I was dying. 4675
  I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre
In its own gray and shrunken ashes lying;
  The pitchy smoke of the departed fire
  Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire
Above the towers, like night; beneath whose shade 4680
  Awed by the ending of their own desire
The armies stood; a vacancy was made
In expectation's depth, and so they stood dismayed.

XXVII

'The frightful silence of that altered mood,
  The tortures of the dying clove alone, 4685
Till one uprose among the multitude,

And said—"The flood of time is rolling on,
We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone
To glide in peace down death's mysterious stream.
Have ye done well? They moulder flesh and bone,
Who might have made this life's envenomed dream
A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

XXVIII

'"These perish as the good and great of yore
Have perished, and their murderers will repent,—
Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before
Yon smoke has faded from the firmament
Even for this cause, that ye who must lament
The death of those that made this world so fair,
Cannot recall them now; but there is lent
To man the wisdom of a high despair,
When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

XXIX

'"Ay, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,
From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn;
All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence
In pain and fire have unbelievers gone;
And ye must sadly turn away, and moan
In secret, to his home each one returning,
And to long ages shall this hour be known;
And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,
Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.

XXX

'"For me the world is grown too void and cold,
Since Hope pursues immortal Destiny
With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold
How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die;
Tell to your children this!" Then suddenly
He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell;
My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me
There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell
Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

XXXI

'Then suddenly I stood, a wingèd Thought,
Before the immortal Senate, and the seat
Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought
The strength of its dominion, good and great,
The better Genius of this world's estate.
His realm around one mighty Fane is spread,
Elysian islands bright and fortunate,
Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,
Where I am sent to lead!' These wingèd words she said,

4699 there] then *ed. 1818.*

XXXII

And with the silence of her eloquent smile,
  Bade us embark in her divine canoe;
Then at the helm we took our seat, the while
  Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue
  Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,
Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer
  On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew
O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,
Whose shores receded fast, whilst we seemed lingering there;

XXXIII

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,
  Between a chasm of cedarn mountains riven,
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet
  As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,
  From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,
The boat fled visibly—three nights and days,
  Borne like a cloud through morn, and noon, and even,
We sailed along the winding watery ways
Of the vast stream, a long and labyrinthine maze.

XXXIV

A scene of joy and wonder to behold
  That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,
When the broad sunrise filled with deepening gold
  Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver;
  And where melodious falls did burst and shiver
Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray
  Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,
Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,
One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay.

XXXV

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran
  The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud
Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,
  Which flieth forth and cannot make abode;
  Sometimes through forests, deep like night, we glode,
Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned
  With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,
The homes of the departed, dimly frowned
O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.

XXXVI

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,
  Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight
To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows
  Over the grass; sometimes beneath the night
  Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright

4749 When] Where *ed. 1818.*

With starry gems, we fled, whilst from their deep
And dark-green chasms, shades beautiful and white,
Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,
Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

XXXVII

And ever as we sailed, our minds were full
Of love and wisdom, which would overflow
In converse wild, and sweet, and wonderful,
And in quick smiles whose light would come and go
Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow
Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—
For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know,
That virtue, though obscured on Earth, not less
Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

XXXVIII

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling
Number delightful hours—for through the sky
The spherèd lamps of day and night, revealing
New changes and new glories, rolled on high,
Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny
Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:
On the fourth day, wild as a windwrought sea
The stream became, and fast and faster bare
The spirit-wingèd boat, steadily speeding there.

XXXIX

Steady and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains
Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour
Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,
The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar
Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,
Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child
Securely fled, that rapid stress before,
Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild,
Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled.

XL

The torrent of that wide and raging river
Is passed, and our aëreal speed suspended.
We look behind; a golden mist did quiver
Where its wild surges with the lake were blended,—
Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended
Between two heavens,—that windless waveless lake
Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended
By mists, aye feed; from rocks and clouds they break,
And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

XLI

Motionless resting on the lake awhile,
I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear
Their peaks aloft, I saw each radiant isle,

4804 Where] When *ed. 1818*. 4805 on a line] one line *ed. 1818*.

And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere
Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear
The Temple of the Spirit; on the sound 4815
Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,
Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,
The charmèd boat approached, and there its haven found.

NOTE ON THE REVOLT OF ISLAM, BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY possessed two remarkable qualities of intellect—a brilliant imagination, and a logical exactness of reason. His inclinations led him (he fancied) almost alike to poetry and metaphysical discussions. I say 'he fancied,' because I believe the former to have been paramount, and that it would have gained the mastery even had he struggled against it. However, he said that he deliberated at one time whether he should dedicate himself to poetry or metaphysics; and, resolving on the former, he educated himself for it, discarding in a great measure his philosophical pursuits, and engaging himself in the study of the poets of Greece, Italy, and England. To these may be added a constant perusal of portions of the Old Testament—the Psalms, the Book of Job, the Prophet Isaiah, and others, the sublime poetry of which filled him with delight.

As a poet, his intellect and compositions were powerfully influenced by exterior circumstances, and especially by his place of abode. He was very fond of travelling, and ill-health increased this restlessness. The sufferings occasioned by a cold English winter made him pine, especially when our colder spring arrived, for a more genial climate. In 1816 he again visited Switzerland, and rented a house on the banks of the Lake of Geneva; and many a day, in cloud or sunshine, was passed alone in his boat—sailing as the wind listed, or weltering on the calm waters. The majestic aspect of Nature ministered such thoughts as he afterwards enwove in verse. His lines on the Bridge of the Arve, and his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, were written at this time. Perhaps during this summer his genius was checked by association with another poet whose nature was utterly dissimilar to his own, yet who, in the poem he wrote at that time, gave tokens that he shared for a period the more abstract and etherealised inspiration of Shelley. The saddest events awaited his return to England; but such was his fear to wound the feelings of others that he never expressed the anguish he felt, and seldom gave vent to the indignation roused by the persecutions he underwent; while the course of deep unexpressed passion, and the sense of injury, engendered the desire to embody themselves in forms defecated of all the weakness and evil which cling to real life.

He chose therefore for his hero a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, some of whose actions are in direct opposition to the opinions of the world; but who is animated throughout by an ardent love of virtue, and a resolution to confer the boons of political and intellectual freedom on his fellow-creatures. He created for this youth a woman such as he delighted to imagine—full of enthusiasm for the same objects; and they both, with will unvanquished, and the deepest sense of the justice of their cause, met adversity and death. There exists in this poem a memorial of a friend of his youth. The character of the old man who liberates Laon from his tower-prison, and tends on him in sickness, is founded on that of Doctor Lind, who, when Shelley was at Eton, had often stood by to befriend and support him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration.

During the year 1817 we were established at Marlow in Buckinghamshire. Shelley's choice of abode was fixed chiefly by this town being at no great distance from London, and its neighbourhood to the Thames. The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech-groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of Nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited (I hope it is altered now) by a very poor population. The women are lacemakers, and lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they were very ill paid. The Poor-laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who had risen just above that state, and were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most heart-rending evils to the poor. Shelley afforded what alleviation he could. In the winter, while bringing out his poem, he had a severe attack of ophthalmia, caught while visiting the poor cottages. I mention these things—for this minute and active sympathy with his fellow-creatures gives a thousandfold interest to his speculations, and stamps with reality his pleadings for the human race.

The poem, bold in its opinions and uncompromising in their expression, met with many censurers, not only among those who allow of no virtue but such as supports the cause they espouse, but even among those whose opinions were similar to his own. I extract a portion of a letter written in answer to one of these friends. It best details the impulses of Shelley's mind, and his motives: it was written with entire unreserve; and is therefore a precious monument of his own opinion of his powers, of the purity of his designs, and the ardour with which he clung, in adversity and through the valley of the shadow of death, to views from which he believed the permanent happiness of mankind must eventually spring.

'*Marlow*, *Dec.* 11, 1817.

'I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of *The Revolt of Islam*; but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem; and this reassures me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling—as real, though not so prophetic—as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed indeed to consider it anything approaching to faultless; but, when I consider contemporary productions of the same apparent pretensions, I own I was filled with confidence. I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists; in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course, I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But, when you advert to my Chancery-paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument, and to the little scrap about *Mandeville*, which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes' thought to express, as specimens of my powers more favourable than that which grew as it were from "the agony and bloody sweat" of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that, in some manner, either I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all, or you in the selection of the specimens of it. Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And, if I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits.' [Shelley to Godwin.]

PRINCE ATHANASE[1]

A FRAGMENT

[Written at Marlow in 1817, towards the close of the year; first published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Part I is dated by Mrs. Shelley, 'December, 1817,' the remainder, 'Marlow, 1817.' The verses were probably rehandled in Italy during the following year. Sources of the text are (1) *Posth. Poems*, 1824; (2) *Poetical Works*, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd; (3) a much-tortured draft amongst the Bodleian MSS., collated by Mr. C. D. Locock. For (1) and (2) Mrs. Shelley is responsible. Our text (enlarged by about thirty lines from the Bodleian MS.) follows for the most part the *P. W.*, 1839; verbal exceptions are pointed out in the footnotes. See also the Editor's Notes at the end of this volume, and Mr. Locock's *Examination of the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.]

PART I

THERE was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,
Had grown quite weak and gray before his time;
Nor any could the restless griefs unravel

Which burned within him, withering up his prime
And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.
Not his the load of any secret crime,

For nought of ill his heart could understand,
But pity and wild sorrow for the same;—
Not his the thirst for glory or command,

Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame;
Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast,
And quench in speedy smoke its feeble flame,

Had left within his soul their dark unrest:
Nor what religion fables of the grave
Feared he,—Philosophy's accepted guest.

For none than he a purer heart could have,
Or that loved good more for itself alone;
Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.

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[1] The idea Shelley had formed of Prince Athanase was a good deal modelled on *Alastor*. In the first sketch of the poem, he named it *Pandemos and Urania*. Athanase seeks through the world the One whom he may love. He meets, in the ship in which he is embarked, a lady who appears to him to embody his ideal of love and beauty. But she proves to be Pandemos, or the earthly and unworthy Venus; who, after disappointing his cherished dreams and hopes, deserts him. Athanase, crushed by sorrow, pines and dies. 'On his deathbed, the lady who can really reply to his soul comes and kisses his lips' (*The Deathbed of Athanase*). The poet describes her [in the words of the final fragment, p. 164]. This slender note is all we have to aid our imagination in shaping out the form of the poem, such as its author imagined. [Mrs. Shelley's Note.]

What sorrow, strange, and shadowy, and unknown,
Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind?—
If with a human sadness he did groan,

He had a gentle yet aspiring mind;
Just, innocent, with varied learning fed;
And such a glorious consolation find

In others' joy, when all their own is dead:
He loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,
And yet, unlike all others, it is said

That from such toil he never found relief.
Although a child of fortune and of power,
Of an ancestral name the orphan chief,

His soul had wedded Wisdom, and her dower
Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,

Pitying the tumult of their dark estate.—
Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse
The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate

Those false opinions which the harsh rich use
To blind the world they famish for their pride;
Nor did he hold from any man his dues,

But, like a steward in honest dealings tried,
With those who toiled and wept, the poor and wise,
His riches and his cares he did divide.

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,
What he dared do or think, though men might start,
He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes;

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,
And to his many friends—all loved him well—
Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell;
If not, he smiled or wept; and his weak foes
He neither spurned nor hated—though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,
They passed like aimless arrows from his ear—
Nor did his heart or mind its portal close

To those, or them, or any, whom life's sphere
May comprehend within its wide array.
What sadness made that vernal spirit sere?—

He knew not. Though his life, day after day,
Was failing like an unreplenished stream,
Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay,

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19 strange *ed. 1839*; deep *ed. 1824*.

Through which his soul, like Vesper's serene beam
Piercing the chasms of ever rising clouds,
Shone, softly burning; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods;
And through his sleep, and o'er each waking hour,
Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him by some secret power,
Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,
Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower to tower

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war
Is levied by the night-contending winds,
And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;—

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends
Which wake and feed an everliving woe,—
What was this grief, which ne'er in other minds

A mirror found,—he knew not—none could know;
But on whoe'er might question him he turned
The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burned,
But asked forbearance with a mournful look;
Or spoke in words from which none ever learned

The cause of his disquietude; or shook
With spasms of silent passion; or turned pale:
So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail;—
For all who knew and loved him then perceived
That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind,—both unrelieved
Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.
Some said that he was mad, others believed

That memories of an antenatal life
Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell;
And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell
On souls like his, which owned no higher law
Than love; love calm, steadfast, invincible

By mortal fear or supernatural awe;
And others,—''Tis the shadow of a dream
Which the veiled eye of Memory never saw,

'But through the soul's abyss, like some dark stream
Through shattered mines and caverns underground,
Rolls, shaking its foundations; and no beam

---

74 feed an *Bodl. MS.*; feed on *edd. 1824, 1839.*

'Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned
In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure;
Soon its exhausted waters will have found

'A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,
O Athanase!—in one so good and great,
Evil or tumult cannot long endure.'

So spake they: idly of another's state
Babbling vain words and fond philosophy;
This was their consolation; such debate

Men held with one another; nor did he,
Like one who labours with a human woe,
Decline this talk: as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro
Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit;
And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit
His weary mind, this converse vain and cold;
For like an eyeless nightmare grief did sit

Upon his being; a snake which fold by fold
Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend
Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold;—
And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold[1].

PART II

FRAGMENT I

PRINCE ATHANASE had one belovèd friend,
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light
Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.
He was the last whom superstition's blight

Had spared in Greece—the blight that cramps and blinds,—
And in his olive bower at Œnoe
Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea,
One mariner who has survived his mates
Many a drear month in a great ship—so he

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates
Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being:—
'The mind becomes that which it contemplates,'—

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[1] The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or gainer by the difference. [Shelley's Note.]

And thus Zonoras, by forever seeing
Their bright creations, grew like wisest men;
And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,
O sacred Hellas! many weary years
He wandered, till the path of Laian's glen

Was grass-grown—and the unremembered tears
Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief,
Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears:—

And as the lady looked with faithful grief
From her high lattice o'er the rugged path,
Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death
Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,
She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight;
And soon within her hospitable hall
She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall;
And his wan visage and his withered mien,
Yet calm and gentle and majestical.

And Athanase, her child, who must have been
Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed
In patient silence.

FRAGMENT II

Such was Zonoras; and as daylight finds
One amaranth glittering on the path of frost,
When autumn nights have nipped all weaker kinds,

Thus through his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tossed,
Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he filled
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child,
With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,
The pupil and the master, shared; until,
Sharing that undiminishable store,

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill
Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran
His teacher, and did teach with native skill

154 beneath *edd. 1824, 1839*; between *Bodl. MS.* 165 One *Bodl. MS. ed. 1839*; An *ed. 1824.* 167 Thus thro' *Bodl. MS.* (?), *ed. 1839*; Thus had *ed. 1824.* 173 talk they *ed. 1824, Bodl. MS.*; talk now *ed. 1839.* 175 that *ed. 1839*; the *ed. 1824.*

Strange truths and new to that experienced man;
Still they were friends, as few have ever been
Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.

So in the caverns of the forest green,
Or on the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar
Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,
The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

Hanging upon the peakèd wave afar,
Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,
Piercing the stormy darkness, like a star

Which pours beyond the sea one steadfast beam,
Whilst all the constellations of the sky
Seemed reeling through the storm . . . They did but seem—

For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by,
And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing,
And far o'er southern waves, immovably

Belted Orion hangs—warm light is flowing
From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.—
'O, summer eve! with power divine, bestowing

'On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm
Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,
Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

'Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness,
Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale,—
And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,—

'And the far sighings of yon piny dale
Made vocal by some wind we feel not here.—
I bear alone what nothing may avail

'To lighten—a strange load!'—No human ear
Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan
Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow, ran,
Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,
Glassy and dark.—And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake,
Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest—
And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

182 So *ed. 1839*; And *ed. 1824.* 183 Or on *Bodl. MS.*; Or by *edd. 1824, 1839.* 199 eve *Bodl. MS. ed. 1839*; night *ed. 1824.* 212 emotion, a swift *edd. 1824, 1839*; emotion with swift *Bodl. MS.*

And, with a soft and equal pressure, pressed
That cold lean hand:—'Dost thou remember yet
When the curved moon then lingering in the west

'Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,
How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea?
'Tis just one year—sure thou dost not forget—

'Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east,
For we had just then read—thy memory

'Is faithful now—the story of the feast;
And Agathon and Diotima seemed
From death and dark forgetfulness released . . . . .'

FRAGMENT III

And when the old man saw that on the green
Leaves of his opening   a blight had lighted
He said: 'My friend, one grief alone can wean

A gentle mind from all that once delighted:—
Thou lovest, and thy secret heart is laden
With feelings which should not be unrequited.'

And Athanase . . . then smiled, as one o'erladen
With iron chains might smile to talk (?) of bands
Twined round her lover's neck by some blithe maiden,
And said . . . . .

FRAGMENT IV

'Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings
From slumber, as a spherèd angel's child,
Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,
Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems—
So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,
The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove
Waxed green—and flowers burst forth like starry beams;—

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,
And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:—
How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen
In any mirror—or the spring's young minions,
The wingèd leaves amid the copses green;—

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,
And his own steps—and over wide dominions

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250 under *ed. 1824, Bodl. MS.*; beneath *ed. 1839.* 256 outstrips *edd. 1824, 1839*; outrides *Bodl. MS.*

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,
More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below,
When winter and despondency are past.

FRAGMENT V

'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase
Passed the white Alps—those eagle-baffling mountains
Slept in their shrouds of snow;—beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless—for their fountains
Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now,
Or by the curdling winds—like brazen wings

Which clanged along the mountain's marble brow—
Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung
And filled with frozen light the chasms below.

Vexed by the blast, the great pines groaned and swung
Under their load of [snow]— . . . .
. . . .
. . . .
Such as the eagle sees, when he dives down
From the gray deserts of wide air, [beheld]
[Prince] Athanase; and o'er his mien (?) was thrown

The shadow of that scene, field after field,
Purple and dim and wide . . . . .

FRAGMENT VI

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all
We can desire, O Love! and happy souls,
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing bowls
Thousands who thirst for thine ambrosial dew;—
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investeth it; and when the heavens are blue
Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear
Beauty like some light robe;—thou ever soarest
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,
Thou floatest among men; and aye implorest

262 mountains *edd. 1824, 1839*; crags *Bodl. MS.* 264 fountains *edd. 1824, 1839*; springs *Bodl. MS.* 269 chasms *Bodl. MS.*; chasm *edd. 1824, 1839.* 283 thine *Bodl. MS.*; thy *edd. 1824, 1839.* 285 Investeth *Bodl. MS.*; Investest *edd. 1824, 1839.* 289 light *Bodl. MS.*; bright *edd. 1824, 1839.*

That which from thee they should implore:—the weak
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts
The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not? the darts
Of the keen winter storm, barbèd with frost,
Which, from the everlasting snow that parts

The Alps from Heaven, pierce some traveller lost
In the wide waved interminable snow
Ungarmented, ...

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (A)

Yes, often when the eyes are cold and dry,
And the lips calm, the Spirit weeps within
Tears bitterer than the blood of agony

Trembling in drops on the discoloured skin
Of those who love their kind and therefore perish
In ghastly torture—a sweet medicine

Of peace and sleep are tears, and quietly
Them soothe from whose uplifted eyes they fall
But . . . . . .

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (B)

Her hair was brown, her spherèd eyes were brown,
And in their dark and liquid moisture swam,
Like the dim orb of the eclipsèd moon;

Yet when the spirit flashed beneath, there came
The light from them, as when tears of delight
Double the western planet's serene flame.

ROSALIND AND HELEN

A MODERN ECLOGUE

[Begun at Marlow, 1817 (summer); already in the press, March, 1818; finished at the Baths of Lucca, August, 1818; published with other poems, as the title-piece of a slender volume, by C. & J. Ollier, London, 1819 (spring). See *Bibliographical List*. Sources of the text are (1) *editio princeps*, 1819; (2) *Poetical Works*, ed. Mrs. Shelley, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd. A fragment of the text is amongst the Boscombe MSS. The poem is reprinted here from the *editio princeps*; verbal alterations are recorded in the footnotes, punctual in the Editor's Notes at the end of this volume.]

ADVERTISEMENT

The story of *Rosalind and Helen* is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awakens a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller to add to this collection. One[1], which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

NAPLES, *Dec.* 20, 1818.

ROSALIND, HELEN AND HER CHILD

Scene, the Shore of the Lake of Como

Helen. Come hither, my sweet Rosalind.
'Tis long since thou and I have met;
And yet methinks it were unkind
Those moments to forget.
Come sit by me. I see thee stand
By this lone lake, in this far land,
Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,
Thy sweet voice to each tone of even
United, and thine eyes replying
To the hues of yon fair heaven.
Come, gentle friend: wilt sit by me?
And be as thou wert wont to be
Ere we were disunited?
None doth behold us now: the power
That led us forth at this lone hour
Will be but ill requited
If thou depart in scorn: oh! come,
And talk of our abandoned home.
Remember, this is Italy,
And we are exiles. Talk with me
Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,
Barren and dark although they be,
Were dearer than these chestnut woods:
Those heathy paths, that inland stream,
And the blue mountains, shapes which seem
Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream:
Which that we have abandoned now,
Weighs on the heart like that remorse
Which altered friendship leaves. I seek
No more our youthful intercourse.
That cannot be! Rosalind, speak.
Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come,
When evening fell upon our common home,
When for one hour we parted,—do not frown:
I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken:
But turn to me. Oh! by this cherished token,
Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,

---

[1] 'Lines written among the Euganean Hills.'—ED.

Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,
And not my scornèd self who prayed to thee.
Rosalind. Is it a dream, or do I see
And hear frail Helen? I would flee
Thy tainting touch; but former years
Arise, and bring forbidden tears;
And my o'erburthened memory
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee.
I share thy crime. I cannot choose
But weep for thee: mine own strange grief
But seldom stoops to such relief:
Nor ever did I love thee less,
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness
Even with a sister's woe. I knew
What to the evil world is due,
And therefore sternly did refuse
To link me with the infamy
Of one so lost as Helen. Now
Bewildered by my dire despair,
Wondering I blush, and weep that thou
Should'st love me still,—thou only!—There,
Let us sit on that gray stone,
Till our mournful talk be done.
Helen. Alas! not there; I cannot bear
The murmur of this lake to hear.
A sound from there, Rosalind dear,
Which never yet I heard elsewhere
But in our native land, recurs,
Even here where now we meet. It stirs
Too much of suffocating sorrow!
In the dell of yon dark chestnut wood
Is a stone seat, a solitude
Less like our own. The ghost of Peace
Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,
If thy kind feelings should not cease,
We may sit here.
Rosalind. Thou lead, my sweet,
And I will follow.
Henry. 'Tis Fenici's seat
Where you are going? This is not the way,
Mamma; it leads behind those trees that grow
Close to the little river.
Helen. Yes: I know:
I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be gay,
Dear boy: why do you sob?
Henry. I do not know:
But it might break any one's heart to see
You and the lady cry so bitterly.
Helen. It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.
We only cried with joy to see each other;
We are quite merry now: Good-night.
The boy
Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,
And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy
Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,
And whispered in her ear, 'Bring home with you
That sweet strange lady-friend.' Then off he flew,
But stopped, and beckoned with a meaning smile,
Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way
Beneath the forest's solitude.
It was a vast and antique wood,
Thro' which they took their way;
And the gray shades of evening
O'er that green wilderness did fling
Still deeper solitude.

63 from there] from thee *ed. 1819.*

Pursuing still the path that wound
The vast and knotted trees around
Through which slow shades were wandering,
To a deep lawny dell they came,
To a stone seat beside a spring,
O'er which the columned wood did frame
A roofless temple, like the fane
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,
Man's early race once knelt beneath
The overhanging deity.
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,
The pale snake, that with eager breath
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood
In the light of his own loveliness;
And the birds that in the fountain dip
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship
Above and round him wheel and hover.
The fitful wind is heard to stir
One solitary leaf on high;
The chirping of the grasshopper
Fills every pause. There is emotion
In all that dwells at noontide here:
Then, through the intricate wild wood,
A maze of life and light and motion
Is woven. But there is stillness now:
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now:
The snake is in his cave asleep;
The birds are on the branches dreaming:
Only the shadows creep:
Only the glow-worm is gleaming:
Only the owls and the nightingales
Wake in this dell when daylight fails,
And gray shades gather in the woods:
And the owls have all fled far away
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.
The accustomed nightingale still broods
On her accustomed bough,
But she is mute; for her false mate
Has fled and left her desolate.

This silent spot tradition old
Had peopled with the spectral dead.
For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold
And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told
That a hellish shape at midnight led
The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,
And sate on the seat beside him there,
Till a naked child came wandering by,
When the fiend would change to a lady fair!
A fearful tale! The truth was worse:
For here a sister and a brother
Had solemnized a monstrous curse,
Meeting in this fair solitude:
For beneath yon very sky,
Had they resigned to one another
Body and soul. The multitude:
Tracking them to the secret wood,
Tore limb from limb their innocent child,
And stabbed and trampled on its mother;
But the youth, for God's most holy grace,
A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came
To this lone silent spot,
From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow
So much of sympathy to borrow
As soothed her own dark lot.
Duly each evening from her home,
With her fair child would Helen come

To sit upon that antique seat,
While the hues of day were pale;
And the bright boy beside her feet
Now lay, lifting at intervals
His broad blue eyes on her;
Now, where some sudden impulse calls
Following. He was a gentle boy
And in all gentle sports took joy;
Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,
With a small feather for a sail,
His fancy on that spring would float,
If some invisible breeze might stir
Its marble calm: and Helen smiled
Through tears of awe on the gay child,
To think that a boy as fair as he,
In years which never more may be,
By that same fount, in that same wood,
The like sweet fancies had pursued;
And that a mother, lost like her,
Had mournfully sate watching him.
Then all the scene was wont to swim
Through the mist of a burning tear.

For many months had Helen known
This scene; and now she thither turned
Her footsteps, not alone.
The friend whose falsehood she had mourned,
Sate with her on that seat of stone.
Silent they sate; for evening,
And the power its glimpses bring
Had, with one awful shadow, quelled
The passion of their grief. They sate
With linkèd hands, for unrepelled
Had Helen taken Rosalind's.
Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds
The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,
Which is twined in the sultry summer air
Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre,
Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,
And the sound of her heart that ever beat,
As with sighs and words she breathed on her,
Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,
Till her thoughts were free to float and flow;
And from her labouring bosom now,
Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,
The voice of a long pent sorrow came.
Rosalind. I saw the dark earth fall upon
The coffin; and I saw the stone
Laid over him whom this cold breast
Had pillowed to his nightly rest!
Thou knowest not, thou canst not know
My agony. Oh! I could not weep:
The sources whence such blessings flow
Were not to be approached by me!
But I could smile, and I could sleep,
Though with a self-accusing heart.
In morning's light, in evening's gloom,
I watched,—and would not thence depart—
My husband's unlamented tomb.
My children knew their sire was gone,
But when I told them,—'he is dead,'—
They laughed aloud in frantic glee,
They clapped their hands and leaped about,
Answering each other's ecstasy
With many a prank and merry shout.
But I sate silent and alone,
Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead: but I
Sate with a hard and tearless eye,
And with a heart which would deny
The secret joy it could not quell,
Low muttering o'er his loathèd name;
Till from that self-contention came
Remorse where sin was none; a hell
Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man
Hard, selfish, loving only gold,
Yet full of guile: his pale eyes ran
With tears, which each some falsehood told,
And oft his smooth and bridled tongue
Would give the lie to his flushing cheek:
He was a coward to the strong:
He was a tyrant to the weak,
On whom his vengeance he would wreak:
For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,
From many a stranger's eye would dart,
And on his memory cling, and follow
His soul to its home so cold and hollow.
He was a tyrant to the weak,
And we were such, alas the day!
Oft, when my little ones at play,
Were in youth's natural lightness gay,
Or if they listened to some tale
Of travellers, or of fairy land,—
When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand
Flashed on their faces,—if they heard
Or thought they heard upon the stair
His footstep, the suspended word
Died on my lips: we all grew pale:
The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear
If it thought it heard its father near;
And my two wild boys would near my knee
Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully.

I'll tell thee truth: I loved another.
His name in my ear was ever ringing,
His form to my brain was ever clinging:
Yet if some stranger breathed that name,
My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast:
My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,
My days were dim in the shadow cast
By the memory of the same!
Day and night, day and night,
He was my breath and life and light,
For three short years, which soon were passed.
On the fourth, my gentle mother
Led me to the shrine, to be
His sworn bride eternally.
And now we stood on the altar stair,
When my father came from a distant land,
And with a loud and fearful cry
Rushed between us suddenly.
I saw the stream of his thin gray hair,
I saw his lean and lifted hand,
And heard his words,—and live! Oh God!
Wherefore do I live?—'Hold, hold!'
He cried,—'I tell thee 'tis her brother!
Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod
Of yon churchyard rests in her shroud so cold:
I am now weak, and pale, and old:
We were once dear to one another,
I and that corpse! Thou art our child!'
Then with a laugh both long and wild
The youth upon the pavement fell:
They found him dead! All looked on me,
The spasms of my despair to see:
But I was calm. I went away:
I was clammy-cold like clay!
I did not weep: I did not speak:
But day by day, week after week,
I walked about like a corpse alive!
Alas! sweet friend, you must believe
This heart is stone: it did not break.
My father lived a little while,
But all might see that he was dying,
He smiled with such a woeful smile!
When he was in the churchyard lying
Among the worms, we grew quite poor,
So that no one would give us bread:
My mother looked at me, and said

Faint words of cheer, which only meant
That she could die and be content;
So I went forth from the same church door
To another husband's bed.
And this was he who died at last,
When weeks and months and years had passed,
Through which I firmly did fulfil
My duties, a devoted wife,
With the stern step of vanquished will,
Walking beneath the night of life,
Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain
Falling for ever, pain by pain,
The very hope of death's dear rest;
Which, since the heart within my breast
Of natural life was dispossessed,
Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green
Upon my mother's grave,—that mother
Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make
My wan eyes glitter for her sake,
Was my vowed task, the single care
Which once gave life to my despair,—
When she was a thing that did not stir
And the crawling worms were cradling her
To a sleep more deep and so more sweet
Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,
I lived: a living pulse then beat
Beneath my heart that awakened me.
What was this pulse so warm and free?
Alas! I knew it could not be
My own dull blood: 'twas like a thought
Of liquid love, that spread and wrought
Under my bosom and in my brain,
And crept with the blood through every vein;
And hour by hour, day after day,
The wonder could not charm away,
But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,
Until I knew it was a child,
And then I wept. For long, long years
These frozen eyes had shed no tears:
But now—'twas the season fair and mild
When April has wept itself to May:
I sate through the sweet sunny day
By my window bowered round with leaves,
And down my cheeks the quick tears fell
Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,
When warm spring showers are passing o'er:
O Helen, none can ever tell
The joy it was to weep once more!

I wept to think how hard it were
To kill my babe, and take from it
The sense of light, and the warm air,
And my own fond and tender care,
And love and smiles; ere I knew yet
That these for it might, as for me,
Be the masks of a grinning mockery.
And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet
To feed it from my faded breast,
Or mark my own heart's restless beat
Rock it to its untroubled rest,
And watch the growing soul beneath
Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its breath,
Half interrupted by calm sighs,
And search the depth of its fair eyes
For long departed memories!
And so I lived till that sweet load
Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed

366 fell] ran *ed. 1819.*

The stream of years, and on it bore
Two shapes of gladness to my sight;
Two other babes, delightful more
In my lost soul's abandoned night,
Than their own country ships may be
Sailing towards wrecked mariners,
Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea.
For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay
Sucking the sullen milk away
About my frozen heart, did play,
And weaned it, oh how painfully!—
As they themselves were weaned each one
From that sweet food,—even from the thirst
Of death, and nothingness, and rest,
Strange inmate of a living breast!
Which all that I had undergone
Of grief and shame, since she, who first
The gates of that dark refuge closed,
Came to my sight, and almost burst
The seal of that Lethean spring;
But these fair shadows interposed:
For all delights are shadows now!
And from my brain to my dull brow
The heavy tears gather and flow:
I cannot speak: Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes
Glimmered among the moonlight dew:
Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs
Their echoes in the darkness threw.
When she grew calm, she thus did keep
The tenor of her tale:
He died:
I know not how: he was not old,
If age be numbered by its years:
But he was bowed and bent with fears,
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,
Which, like fierce fever, left him weak;
And his strait lip and bloated cheek
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers;
And selfish cares with barren plough,
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed
Upon the withering life within,
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.
Whether his ill were death or sin
None knew, until he died indeed,
And then men owned they were the same.

Seven days within my chamber lay
That corse, and my babes made holiday:
At last, I told them what is death:
The eldest, with a kind of shame,
Came to my knees with silent breath,
And sate awe-stricken at my feet;
And soon the others left their play,
And sate there too. It is unmeet
To shed on the brief flower of youth
The withering knowledge of the grave;
From me remorse then wrung that truth.
I could not bear the joy which gave
Too just a response to mine own.
In vain. I dared not feign a groan;
And in their artless looks I saw,
Between the mists of fear and awe,
That my own thought was theirs; and they
Expressed it not in words, but said,
Each in its heart, how every day
Will pass in happy work and play,
Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin
Assembled, and the will was read.
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead
Have strength, their putrid shrouds within,
To blast and torture. Those who live
Still fear the living, but a corse
Is merciless, and power doth give

405–408 See Editor's Note on this passage.

To such pale tyrants half the spoil
He rends from those who groan and toil,
Because they blush not with remorse
Among their crawling worms. Behold,
I have no child! my tale grows old
With grief, and staggers: let it reach
The limits of my feeble speech,
And languidly at length recline
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty
Among the fallen on evil days:
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,
And houseless Want in frozen ways
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,
And, worse than all, that inward stain
Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers
Youth's starlight smile, and makes its tears
First like hot gall, then dry for ever!
And well thou knowest a mother never
Could doom her children to this ill,
And well he knew the same. The will
Imported, that if e'er again
I sought my children to behold,
Or in my birthplace did remain
Beyond three days, whose hours were told,
They should inherit nought: and he,
To whom next came their patrimony,
A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,
Aye watched me, as the will was read,
With eyes askance, which sought to see
The secrets of my agony;
And with close lips and anxious brow
Stood canvassing still to and fro
The chance of my resolve, and all
The dead man's caution just did call;
For in that killing lie 'twas said—
'She is adulterous, and doth hold
In secret that the Christian creed
Is false, and therefore is much need
That I should have a care to save
My children from eternal fire.'
Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,
And therefore dared to be a liar!
In truth, the Indian on the pyre
Of her dead husband, half consumed,
As well might there be false, as I
To those abhorred embraces doomed,
Far worse than fire's brief agony.
As to the Christian creed, if true
Or false, I never questioned it:
I took it as the vulgar do:
Nor my vexed soul had leisure yet
To doubt the things men say, or deem
That they are other than they seem.

All present who those crimes did hear,
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,
Men, women, children, slunk away,
Whispering with self-contented pride,
Which half suspects its own base lie.
I spoke to none, nor did abide,
But silently I went my way,
Nor noticed I where joyously
Sate my two younger babes at play,
In the court-yard through which I passed;
But went with footsteps firm and fast
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,
And there, a woman with gray hairs,
Who had my mother's servant been,
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,
Made me accept a purse of gold,
Half of the earnings she had kept
To refuge her when weak and old.

With woe, which never sleeps or slept,
I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought—
But on yon alp, whose snowy head
'Mid the azure air is islanded,

(We see it o'er the flood of cloud,
Which sunrise from its eastern caves
Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,
Hung with its precipices proud,
From that gray stone where first we met)
There—now who knows the dead feel nought?—
Should be my grave; for he who yet
Is my soul's soul, once said: ‘’Twere sweet
’Mid stars and lightnings to abide,
And winds and lulling snows, that beat
With their soft flakes the mountain wide,
Where weary meteor lamps repose,
And languid storms their pinions close:
And all things strong and bright and pure,
And ever during, aye endure:
Who knows, if one were buried there,
But these things might our spirits make,
Amid the all-surrounding air,
Their own eternity partake?’
Then ’twas a wild and playful saying
At which I laughed, or seemed to laugh:
They were his words: now heed my praying,
And let them be my epitaph.
Thy memory for a term may be
My monument. Wilt remember me?
I know thou wilt, and canst forgive
Whilst in this erring world to live
My soul disdained not, that I thought
Its lying forms were worthy aught
And much less thee.
Helen. O speak not so,
But come to me and pour thy woe
Into this heart, full though it be,
Ay, overflowing with its own:
I thought that grief had severed me
From all beside who weep and groan;
Its likeness upon earth to be,
Its express image; but thou art
More wretched. Sweet! we will not part
Henceforth, if death be not division;
If so, the dead feel no contrition.
But wilt thou hear since last we parted
All that has left me broken hearted?
Rosalind. Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn
Of their thin beams by that delusive morn
Which sinks again in darkness, like the light
Of early love, soon lost in total night.
Helen. Alas! Italian winds are mild,
But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—
When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,
Soft music, my poor brain is wild,
And I am weak like a nursling child,
Though my soul with grief is gray and old.
Rosalind. Weep not at thine own words, though they must make
Me weep. What is thy tale?
Helen. I fear ’twill shake
Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well
Rememberest when we met no more,
And, though I dwelt with Lionel,
That friendless caution pierced me sore
With grief; a wound my spirit bore
Indignantly, but when he died
With him lay dead both hope and pride.
Alas! all hope is buried now.
But then men dreamed the agèd earth
Was labouring in that mighty birth,
Which many a poet and a sage
Has aye foreseen—the happy age
When truth and love shall dwell below
Among the works and ways of men;

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551 Where] When *ed. 1819.*
572 Ay, overflowing] Aye overflowing *ed. 1819.*

Which on this world not power but will
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befell
Of strife, how vain, is known too well;
When Liberty's dear paean fell
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,
Though of great wealth and lineage high,
Yet through those dungeon walls there came
Thy thrilling light, O Liberty!
And as the meteor's midnight flame
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth
Flashed on his visionary youth,
And filled him, not with love, but faith,
And hope, and courage mute in death;
For love and life in him were twins,
Born at one birth: in every other
First life then love its course begins,
Though they be children of one mother;
And so through this dark world they fleet
Divided, till in death they meet:
But he loved all things ever. Then
He passed amid the strife of men,
And stood at the throne of armèd power
Pleading for a world of woe:
Secure as one on a rock-built tower
O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro,
'Mid the passions wild of human kind
He stood, like a spirit calming them;
For, it was said, his words could bind
Like music the lulled crowd, and stem
That torrent of unquiet dream,
Which mortals truth and reason deem,
But is revenge and fear and pride.
Joyous he was; and hope and peace
On all who heard him did abide,
Raining like dew from his sweet talk,
As where the evening star may walk
Along the brink of the gloomy seas,
Liquid mists of splendour quiver.
His very gestures touched to tears
The unpersuaded tyrant, never
So moved before: his presence stung
The torturers with their victim's pain,
And none knew how; and through their ears,
The subtle witchcraft of his tongue
Unlocked the hearts of those who keep
Gold, the world's bond of slavery.
Men wondered, and some sneered to see
One sow what he could never reap:
For he is rich, they said, and young,
And might drink from the depths of luxury.
If he seeks Fame, Fame never crowned
The champion of a trampled creed:
If he seeks Power, Power is enthroned
'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,
Those who would sit near Power must toil;
And such, there sitting, all may see.
What seeks he? All that others seek
He casts away, like a vile weed
Which the sea casts unreturningly.
That poor and hungry men should break
The laws which wreak them toil and scorn,
We understand; but Lionel
We know is rich and nobly born.
So wondered they: yet all men loved
Young Lionel, though few approved;
All but the priests, whose hatred fell
Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,
The withering honey dew, which clings
Under the bright green buds of May,
Whilst they unfold their emerald wings:

For he made verses wild and queer
On the strange creeds priests hold so dear,
Because they bring them land and gold.
Of devils and saints and all such gear,
He made tales which whoso heard or read
Would laugh till he were almost dead.
So this grew a proverb: 'Don't get old
Till Lionel's "Banquet in Hell" you hear,
And then you will laugh yourself young again.'
So the priests hated him, and he
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,
For public hope grew pale and dim
In an altered time and tide,
And in its wasting withered him,
As a summer flower that blows too soon
Droops in the smile of the waning moon,
When it scatters through an April night
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.
None now hoped more. Gray Power was seated
Safely on her ancestral throne;
And Faith, the Python, undefeated,
Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on
Her foul and wounded train, and men
Were trampled and deceived again,
And words and shows again could bind
The wailing tribes of human kind
In scorn and famine. Fire and blood
Raged round the raging multitude,
To fields remote by tyrants sent
To be the scornèd instrument
With which they drag from mines of gore
The chains their slaves yet ever wore:
And in the streets men met each other,
And by old altars and in halls,
And smiled again at festivals.
But each man found in his heart's brother
Cold cheer; for all, though half deceived,
The outworn creeds again believed,
And the same round anew began,
Which the weary world yet ever ran.

Many then wept, not tears, but gall
Within their hearts, like drops which fall
Wasting the fountain-stone away.
And in that dark and evil day
Did all desires and thoughts, that claim
Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame,
Love, hope, though hope was now despair—
Indue the colours of this change,
As from the all-surrounding air
The earth takes hues obscure and strange,
When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befell
To many, most to Lionel,
Whose hope was like the life of youth
Within him, and when dead, became
A spirit of unresting flame,
Which goaded him in his distress
Over the world's vast wilderness.
Three years he left his native land,
And on the fourth, when he returned,
None knew him: he was stricken deep
With some disease of mind, and turned
Into aught unlike Lionel.
On him, on whom, did he pause in sleep,
Serenest smiles were wont to keep,
And, did he wake, a wingèd band

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711 gore *edd. 1819, 1839.* See Editor's Note.

Of bright persuasions, which had fed
On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,
Kept their swift pinions half outspread,
To do on men his least command;
On him, whom once 'twas paradise
Even to behold, now misery lay:
In his own heart 'twas merciless,
To all things else none may express
Its innocence and tenderness.

'Twas said that he had refuge sought
In love from his unquiet thought
In distant lands, and been deceived
By some strange show; for there were found,
Blotted with tears as those relieved
By their own words are wont to do,
These mournful verses on the ground,
By all who read them blotted too.

'How am I changed! my hopes were once like fire:
I loved, and I believed that life was love.
How am I lost! on wings of swift desire
Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire
My liquid sleep: I woke, and did approve
All nature to my heart, and thought to make
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

'I love, but I believe in love no more.
I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep
Most vainly must my weary brain implore
Its long lost flattery now: I wake to weep,
And sit through the long day gnawing the core
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,
Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure,
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.'

He dwelt beside me near the sea:
And oft in evening did we meet,
When the waves, beneath the starlight, flee
O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,
And talked: our talk was sad and sweet,
Till slowly from his mien there passed
The desolation which it spoke;
And smiles,—as when the lightning's blast
Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,
The next spring shows leaves pale and rare,
But like flowers delicate and fair,
On its rent boughs,—again arrayed
His countenance in tender light:
His words grew subtile fire, which made
The air his hearers breathed delight:
His motions, like the winds, were free,
Which bend the bright grass gracefully,
Then fade away in circlets faint:
And wingèd Hope, on which upborne
His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,
Like some bright spirit newly born
Floating amid the sunny skies,
Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.
Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,
Tempering their loveliness too keen,
Past woe its shadow backward threw,
Till like an exhalation, spread
From flowers half drunk with evening dew,
They did become infectious: sweet
And subtile mists of sense and thought:
Which wrapped us soon, when we might meet,
Almost from our own looks and aught
The wide world holds. And so, his mind
Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear:
For ever now his health declined,

Like some frail bark which cannot bear
The impulse of an altered wind,
Though prosperous: and my heart grew full
’Mid its new joy of a new care:
For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,
As rose-o’ershadowed lilies are;
And soon his deep and sunny hair,
In this alone less beautiful,
Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.
The blood in his translucent veins
Beat, not like animal life, but love
Seemed now its sullen springs to move,
When life had failed, and all its pains:
And sudden sleep would seize him oft
Like death, so calm, but that a tear,
His pointed eyelashes between,
Would gather in the light serene
Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft
Beneath lay undulating there.
His breath was like inconstant flame,
As eagerly it went and came;
And I hung o’er him in his sleep,
Till, like an image in the lake
Which rains disturb, my tears would break
The shadow of that slumber deep:
Then he would bid me not to weep,
And say with flattery false, yet sweet,
That death and he could never meet,
If I would never part with him.
And so we loved, and did unite
All that in us was yet divided:
For when he said, that many a rite,
By men to bind but once provided,
Could not be shared by him and me,
Or they would kill him in their glee,
I shuddered, and then laughing said—
‘We will have rites our faith to bind,
But our church shall be the starry night,
Our altar the grassy earth outspread,
And our priest the muttering wind.’
’Twas sunset as I spoke: one star
Had scarce burst forth, when from afar
The ministers of misrule sent,
Seized upon Lionel, and bore
His chained limbs to a dreary tower,
In the midst of a city vast and wide.
For he, they said, from his mind had bent
Against their gods keen blasphemy,
For which, though his soul must roasted be
In hell’s red lakes immortally,
Yet even on earth must he abide
The vengeance of their slaves: a trial,
I think, men call it. What avail
Are prayers and tears, which chase denial
From the fierce savage, nursed in hate?
What the knit soul that pleading and pale
Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late
It painted with its own delight?
We were divided. As I could,
I stilled the tingling of my blood,
And followed him in their despite,
As a widow follows, pale and wild,
The murderers and corse of her only child;
And when we came to the prison door
And I prayed to share his dungeon floor
With prayers which rarely have been spurned,
And when men drove me forth and I
Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,
A farewell look of love he turned,
Half calming me; then gazed awhile,
As if thro’ that black and massy pile,
And thro’ the crowd around him there,
And thro’ the dense and murky air,
And the thronged streets, he did espy
What poets know and prophesy;

And said, with voice that made them shiver
And clung like music in my brain,
And which the mute walls spoke again
Prolonging it with deepened strain:
‘Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith;
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death:
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks in the surge of eternity.’

I dwelt beside the prison gate,
And the strange crowd that out and in
Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,
Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din,
But the fever of care was louder within.
Soon, but too late, in penitence
Or fear, his foes released him thence:
I saw his thin and languid form,
As leaning on the jailor's arm,
Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,
To meet his mute and faded smile,
And hear his words of kind farewell,
He tottered forth from his damp cell.
Many had never wept before,
From whom fast tears then gushed and fell:
Many will relent no more,
Who sobbed like infants then: aye, all
Who thronged the prison's stony hall,
The rulers or the slaves of law,
Felt with a new surprise and awe
That they were human, till strong shame
Made them again become the same.
The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,
From human looks the infection caught,
And fondly crouched and fawned on him;
And men have heard the prisoners say,
Who in their rotting dungeons lay,
That from that hour, throughout one day,
The fierce despair and hate which kept
Their trampled bosoms almost slept:
Where, like twin vultures, they hung feeding
On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,—
Because their jailors' rule, they thought,
Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.

I know not how, but we were free:
And Lionel sate alone with me,
As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace;
And we looked upon each other's face;
And the blood in our fingers intertwined
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,
As the swift emotions went and came
Thro' the veins of each united frame.
So thro' the long long streets we passed
Of the million-peopled City vast;
Which is that desert, where each one
Seeks his mate yet is alone,
Beloved and sought and mourned of none;
Until the clear blue sky was seen,
And the grassy meadows bright and green,
And then I sunk in his embrace,
Enclosing there a mighty space
Of love: and so we travelled on

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932 Where] When *ed. 1819.*

By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,
And towns, and villages, and towers,
Day after day of happy hours.
It was the azure time of June,
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,
And the warm and fitful breezes shake
The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row briar,
And there were odours then to make
The very breath we did respire
A liquid element, whereon
Our spirits, like delighted things
That walk the air on subtle wings,
Floated and mingled far away,
'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.
And when the evening star came forth
Above the curve of the new bent moon,
And light and sound ebbed from the earth,
Like the tide of the full and weary sea
To the depths of its tranquillity,
Our natures to its own repose
Did the earth's breathless sleep attune:
Like flowers, which on each other close
Their languid leaves when daylight's gone,
We lay, till new emotions came,
Which seemed to make each mortal frame
One soul of interwoven flame,
A life in life, a second birth
In worlds diviner far than earth,
Which, like two strains of harmony
That mingle in the silent sky
Then slowly disunite, passed by
And left the tenderness of tears,
A soft oblivion of all fears,
A sweet sleep: so we travelled on
Till we came to the home of Lionel,
Among the mountains wild and lone,
Beside the hoary western sea,
Which near the verge of the echoing shore
The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,
As we alighted, wept to see
His master changed so fearfully;
And the old man's sobs did waken me
From my dream of unremaining gladness;
The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness
When I looked, and saw that there was death
On Lionel: yet day by day
He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,
And in my soul I dared to say,
Nothing so bright can pass away:
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,
But he is—O how beautiful!
Yet day by day he grew more weak,
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,
Which ne'er was loud, became more low;
And the light which flashed through his waxen cheek
Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:
And death seemed not like death in him,
For the spirit of life o'er every limb
Lingered, a mist of sense and thought.
When the summer wind faint odours brought
From mountain flowers, even as it passed
His cheek would change, as the noonday sea
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,
You might see his colour come and go,
And the softest strain of music made
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade
Amid the dew of his tender eyes;

And the breath, with intermitting flow,
Made his pale lips quiver and part.
You might hear the beatings of his heart,
Quick, but not strong; and with my tresses
When oft he playfully would bind
In the bowers of mossy lonelinesses
His neck, and win me so to mingle
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,
And our faint limbs were intertwined,
Alas! the unquiet life did tingle
From mine own heart through every vein,
Like a captive in dreams of liberty,
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.
But his, it seemed already free,
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me!
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell
That spirit as it passed, till soon,
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,
Beneath its light invisible,
Is seen when it folds its gray wings again
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul
Passed from beneath that strong control,
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear
Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,
On a green and sea-girt promontory,
Not far from where we dwelt, there stood
In record of a sweet sad story,
An altar and a temple bright
Circled by steps, and o'er the gate
Was sculptured, 'To Fidelity;'
And in the shrine an image sate,
All veiled: but there was seen the light
Of smiles, which faintly could express
A mingled pain and tenderness
Through that ethereal drapery.
The left hand held the head, the right—
Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,
You might see the nerves quivering within—
Was forcing the point of a barbèd dart
Into its side-convulsing heart.
An unskilled hand, yet one informed
With genius, had the marble warmed
With that pathetic life. This tale
It told: A dog had from the sea,
When the tide was raging fearfully,
Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale,
Then died beside her on the sand,
And she that temple thence had planned;
But it was Lionel's own hand
Had wrought the image. Each new moon
That lady did, in this lone fane,
The rites of a religion sweet,
Whose god was in her heart and brain:
The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn
On the marble floor beneath her feet,
And she brought crowns of sea-buds white,
Whose odour is so sweet and faint,
And weeds, like branching chrysolite,
Woven in devices fine and quaint,
And tears from her brown eyes did stain
The altar: need but look upon
That dying statue fair and wan,
If tears should cease, to weep again:
And rare Arabian odours came,
Through the myrtle copses steaming thence
From the hissing frankincense,
Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,
Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome—
That ivory dome, whose azure night
With golden stars, like heaven, was bright—

1093–1096 *See Editor's Note.*

O'er the split cedar's pointed flame;
And the lady's harp would kindle there
The melody of an old air,
Softer than sleep; the villagers
Mixed their religion up with hers,
And as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane:
Daylight on its last purple cloud
Was lingering gray, and soon her strain
The nightingale began; now loud,
Climbing in circles the windless sky,
Now dying music; suddenly
'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,
And now to the hushed ear it floats
Like field smells known in infancy,
Then failing, soothes the air again.
We sate within that temple lone,
Pavilioned round with Parian stone:
His mother's harp stood near, and oft
I had awakened music soft
Amid its wires: the nightingale
Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale:
'Now drain the cup,' said Lionel,
'Which the poet-bird has crowned so well
With the wine of her bright and liquid song!
Heardst thou not sweet words among
That heaven-resounding minstrelsy?
Heardst thou not, that those who die
Awake in a world of ecstasy?
That love, when limbs are interwoven,
And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,
And thought, to the world's dim boundaries clinging,
And music, when one beloved is singing,
Is death? Let us drain right joyously
The cup which the sweet bird fills for me.'
He paused, and to my lips he bent
His own: like spirit his words went
Through all my limbs with the speed of fire;
And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,
Filled me with the flame divine,
Which in their orbs was burning far,
Like the light of an unmeasured star,
In the sky of midnight dark and deep:
Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire
Sounds, which my skill could ne'er awaken;
And first, I felt my fingers sweep
The harp, and a long quivering cry
Burst from my lips in symphony:
The dusk and solid air was shaken,
As swift and swifter the notes came
From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,
And from my bosom, labouring
With some unutterable thing:
The awful sound of my own voice made
My faint lips tremble; in some mood
Of wordless thought Lionel stood
So pale, that even beside his cheek
The snowy column from its shade
Caught whiteness: yet his countenance
Raised upward, burned with radiance
Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,
Like the moon struggling through the night
Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break
With beams that might not be confined.
I paused, but soon his gestures kindled
New power, as by the moving wind
The waves are lifted, and my song
To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,
And from the twinkling wires among,
My languid fingers drew and flung
Circles of life-dissolving sound,
Yet faint; in aëry rings they bound
My Lionel, who, as every strain
Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien

Sunk with the sound relaxedly;
And slowly now he turned to me,
As slowly faded from his face
That awful joy: with looks serene
He was soon drawn to my embrace,
And my wild song then died away
In murmurs: words I dare not say
We mixed, and on his lips mine fed
Till they methought felt still and cold:
'What is it with thee, love?' I said:
No word, no look, no motion! yes,
There was a change, but spare to guess,
Nor let that moment's hope be told.
I looked, and knew that he was dead,
And fell, as the eagle on the plain
Falls when life deserts her brain,
And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

O that I were now dead! but such
(Did they not, love, demand too much,
Those dying murmurs?) he forbade.
O that I once again were mad!
And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,
For I would live to share thy woe.
Sweet boy, did I forget thee too?
Alas, we know not what we do
When we speak words.
No memory more
Is in my mind of that sea shore.
Madness came on me, and a troop
Of misty shapes did seem to sit
Beside me, on a vessel's poop,
And the clear north wind was driving it.
Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers,
And the stars methought grew unlike ours,
And the azure sky and the stormless sea
Made me believe that I had died,
And waked in a world, which was to me
Drear hell, though heaven to all beside:
Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,
Whilst animal life many long years
Had rescue from a chasm of tears;
And when I woke, I wept to find
That the same lady, bright and wise,
With silver locks and quick brown eyes,
The mother of my Lionel,
Had tended me in my distress,
And died some months before. Nor less
Wonder, but far more peace and joy
Brought in that hour my lovely boy;
For through that trance my soul had well
The impress of thy being kept;
And if I waked, or if I slept,
No doubt, though memory faithless be,
Thy image ever dwelt on me;
And thus, O Lionel, like thee
Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strange
I knew not of so great a change,
As that which gave him birth, who now
Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left
By will to me, and that of all
The ready lies of law bereft
My child and me, might well befall.
But let me think not of the scorn,
Which from the meanest I have borne,
When, for my child's belovèd sake,
I mixed with slaves, to vindicate
The very laws themselves do make:
Let me not say scorn is my fate,
Lest I be proud, suffering the same
With those who live in deathless fame.

She ceased.—'Lo, where red morning thro' the woods
Is burning o'er the dew;' said Rosalind.
And with these words they rose, and towards the flood

1168–1171] *See Editor's Note.* 1209 rescue] rescued *ed. 1819. See Editor's Note.*

Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind
With equal steps and fingers intertwined:
Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore
Is shadowed with deep rocks, and cypresses
Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies,
And with their shadows the clear depths below,
And where a little terrace from its bowers,
Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers,
Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o’er
The liquid marble of the windless lake;
And where the agèd forest’s limbs look hoar,
Under the leaves which their green garments make,
They come: ’tis Helen’s home, and clean and white,
Like one which tyrants spare on our own land
In some such solitude, its casements bright
Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,
And even within ’twas scarce like Italy.
And when she saw how all things there were planned,
As in an English home, dim memory
Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood as one
Whose mind is where his body cannot be,
Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,
And said, ‘Observe, that brow was Lionel’s,
Those lips were his, and so he ever kept
One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.
You cannot see his eyes, they are two wells
Of liquid love: let us not wake him yet.’
But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept
A shower of burning tears, which fell upon
His face, and so his opening lashes shone
With tears unlike his own, as he did leap
In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together
Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,
Such as they were, when o’er the mountain heather
They wandered in their youth, through sun and rain.
And after many years, for human things
Change even like the ocean and the wind,
Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,
And in their circle thence some visitings
Of joy ’mid their new calm would intervene:
A lovely child she was, of looks serene,
And motions which o’er things indifferent shed
The grace and gentleness from whence they came.
And Helen’s boy grew with her, and they fed
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind
Like springs which mingle in one flood became,
And in their union soon their parents saw
The shadow of the peace denied to them.
And Rosalind, for when the living stem
Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,
Died ere her time; and with deep grief and awe

The pale survivors followed her remains
Beyond the region of dissolving rains,
Up the cold mountain she was wont to call
Her tomb; and on Chiavenna's precipice
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,
Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun,
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,
The last, when it had sunk; and thro' the night
The charioteers of Arctos wheelèd round
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come,
With willing steps climbing that rugged height,
And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound
With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,
Filled the frore air with unaccustomed light:
Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom
Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,
Whose sufferings too were less, Death slowlier led
Into the peace of his dominion cold:
She died among her kindred, being old.
And know, that if love die not in the dead
As in the living, none of mortal kind
Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

Rosalind and Helen was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside—till I found it; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love but he shed a grace borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed, on that passion. When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against we err and injure ourselves and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secrets of all hearts; and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords of our nature.

Rosalind and Helen was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the baths of Lucca.

JULIAN AND MADDALO

A CONVERSATION

[Composed at Este after Shelley's first visit to Venice, 1818 (Autumn); first published in the *Posthumous Poems*, London, 1824 (ed. Mrs. Shelley). Shelley's original intention had been to print the poem in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*; but he changed his mind and, on August 15, 1819, sent the MS. to Hunt to be published anonymously by Ollier. This MS., found by Mr. Townshend Mayer, and by him placed in the hands of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., is described at length in Mr. Forman's Library Edition of the poems (vol. iii, p. 107). The date, 'May, 1819,' affixed to *Julian and Maddalo* in the *P. P.*, 1824, indicates the time when the text was finally revised by Shelley. Sources of the text are (1) *P. P.*, 1824; (2) the Hunt MS.; (3) a fair draft of the poem amongst the Boscombe MSS.; (4) *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st and 2nd edd. (Mrs. Shelley). Our text is that of the Hunt MS., as printed in Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876, vol. iii, pp. 103–30; variants of 1824 are indicated in the footnotes; questions of punctuation are dealt with in the notes at end of the volume.]

PREFACE

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,
The goats with the green leaves of budding Spring,
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.—VIRGIL'S *Gallus*.

COUNT MADDALO is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentered and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank, and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems, by his own account, to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind: the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow
Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand
Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,
Is this; an uninhabited sea-side,
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,
Abandons; and no other object breaks
The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes
Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes
A narrow space of level sand thereon,
Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down.
This ride was my delight. I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows; and yet more
Than all, with a remembered friend I love
To ride as then I rode;—for the winds drove
The living spray along the sunny air
Into our faces; the blue heavens were bare,
Stripped to their depths by the awakening north;
And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth
Harmonising with solitude, and sent
Into our hearts aëreal merriment.
So, as we rode, we talked; and the swift thought,
Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,
But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours,
Charged with light memories of remembered hours,

None slow enough for sadness: till we came
Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.
This day had been cheerful but cold, and now
The sun was sinking, and the wind also.
Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be
Talk interrupted with such raillery
As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn
The thoughts it would extinguish:—'twas forlorn,
Yet pleasing, such as once, so poets tell,
The devils held within the dales of Hell
Concerning God, freewill and destiny:
Of all that earth has been or yet may be,
All that vain men imagine or believe,
Or hope can paint or suffering may achieve,
We descanted, and I (for ever still
Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)
Argued against despondency, but pride
Made my companion take the darker side.
The sense that he was greater than his kind 84
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind
By gazing on its own exceeding light.
Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight,
Over the horizon of the mountains;—Oh,
How beautiful is sunset, when the glow
Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,
Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy!
Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers
Of cities they encircle!—it was ours
To stand on thee, beholding it: and then,
Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men
Were waiting for us with the gondola.—
As those who pause on some delightful way
Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood
Looking upon the evening, and the flood
Which lay between the city and the shore,
Paved with the image of the sky . . . the hoar
And aëry Alps towards the North appeared
Through mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared
Between the East and West; and half the sky
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
Down the steep West into a wondrous hue
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
Among the many-folded hills: they were
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,
As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles,
The likeness of a clump of peakèd isles—
And then—as if the Earth and Sea had been
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen

45 may *Hunt MS.*; can *1824*.

Those mountains towering as from waves of flame
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
Their very peaks transparent. 'Ere it fade,'
Said my companion, 'I will show you soon
A better station'—so, o'er the lagune
We glided; and from that funereal bark
I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark
How from their many isles, in evening's gleam,
Its temples and its palaces did seem
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.
I was about to speak, when—'We are even
Now at the point I meant,' said Maddalo,
And bade the gondolieri cease to row.
'Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.'
I looked, and saw between us and the sun
A building on an island; such a one
As age to age might add, for uses vile,
A windowless, deformed and dreary pile;
And on the top an open tower, where hung
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung;
We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue:
The broad sun sunk behind it, and it tolled
In strong and black relief.—'What we behold
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,'
Said Maddalo, 'and ever at this hour
Those who may cross the water, hear that bell
Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell,
To vespers.'—'As much skill as need to pray
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they
To their stern maker,' I replied. 'O ho!
You talk as in years past,' said Maddalo.
''Tis strange men change not. You were ever still
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,
A wolf for the meek lambs—if you can't swim
Beware of Providence.' I looked on him,
But the gay smile had faded in his eye.
'And such,'—he cried, 'is our mortality,
And this must be the emblem and the sign
Of what should be eternal and divine!—
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,
Hung in a heaven-illumined tower, must toll
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below
Round the rent heart and pray—as madmen do
For what? they know not,—till the night of death
As sunset that strange vision, severeth
Our memory from itself, and us from all

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99 a one *Hunt MS.*; an one *1824.* 105 sunk *Hunt MS.*; sank *1824.*
108 ever *Hunt MS.*; even *1824.* 119 in *Hunt MS.*; from *1824.*
124 a *Hunt MS.*; an *1824.*

We sought and yet were baffled.' I recall
The sense of what he said, although I mar
The force of his expressions. The broad star
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill,
And the black bell became invisible,
And the red tower looked gray, and all between
The churches, ships and palaces were seen
Huddled in gloom;—into the purple sea
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.
We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola
Conveyed me to my lodging by the way.
The following morn was rainy, cold and dim:
Ere Maddalo arose, I called on him,
And whilst I waited with his child I played;
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being,
Graceful without design and unforeseeing,
With eyes—Oh speak not of her eyes!—which seem
Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam
With such deep meaning, as we never see
But in the human countenance: with me
She was a special favourite: I had nursed
Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first
To this bleak world; and she yet seemed to know
On second sight her ancient playfellow,
Less changed than she was by six months or so;
For after her first shyness was worn out
We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,
When the Count entered. Salutations past—
'The word you spoke last night might well have cast
A darkness on my spirit—if man be
The passive thing you say, I should not see
Much harm in the religions and old saws
(Tho' I may never own such leaden laws)
Which break a teachless nature to the yoke:
Mine is another faith'—thus much I spoke
And noting he replied not, added: 'See
This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free;
She spends a happy time with little care,
While we to such sick thoughts subjected are
As came on you last night—it is our will
That thus enchains us to permitted ill—
We might be otherwise—we might be all
We dream of happy, high, majestical.
Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek
But in our mind? and if we were not weak
Should we be less in deed than in desire?'
'Ay, if we were not weak—and we aspire
How vainly to be strong!' said Maddalo:

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140 lodging *1824*; lodgings *Hunt MS.* 171 That *Hunt MS.*; Which *1824.* 175 mind *Hunt MS.*; minds *1824.*

'You talk Utopia.' 'It remains to know,'
I then rejoined, 'and those who try may find
How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;
Brittle perchance as straw . . . We are assured
Much may be conquered, much may be endured,
Of what degrades and crushes us. We know
That we have power over ourselves to do
And suffer—what, we know not till we try;
But something nobler than to live and die—
So taught those kings of old philosophy
Who reigned, before Religion made men blind;
And those who suffer with their suffering kind
Yet feel their faith, religion.' 'My dear friend,'
Said Maddalo, 'my judgement will not bend
To your opinion, though I think you might
Make such a system refutation-tight
As far as words go. I knew one like you
Who to this city came some months ago,
With whom I argued in this sort, and he
Is now gone mad,—and so he answered me,—
Poor fellow! but if you would like to go
We'll visit him, and his wild talk will show
How vain are such aspiring theories.'
'I hope to prove the induction otherwise,
And that a want of that true theory, still,
Which seeks a "soul of goodness" in things ill
Or in himself or others, has thus bowed
His being—there are some by nature proud,
Who patient in all else demand but this—
To love and be beloved with gentleness;
And being scorned, what wonder if they die
Some living death? this is not destiny
But man's own wilful ill.'
                                        As thus I spoke
Servants announced the gondola, and we
Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea
Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.
We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,
Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen,
And laughter where complaint had merrier been,
Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming prayers
Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs
Into an old courtyard. I heard on high,
Then, fragments of most touching melody,
But looking up saw not the singer there—
Through the black bars in the tempestuous air
I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing,
Long tangled locks flung wildly forth, and flowing,

179 know *1824*; see *Hunt MS.* 188 those *Hunt MS.*; the *1824.* 191 their *Hunt MS.*; this *1824.* 218 Moans, *&c.*, *Hunt MS. The line is wanting in edd. 1824 and 1839.*

Of those who on a sudden were beguiled
Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled
Hearing sweet sounds.—Then I: 'Methinks there were
A cure of these with patience and kind care,
If music can thus move . . . but what is he
Whom we seek here?' 'Of his sad history
I know but this,' said Maddalo: 'he came
To Venice a dejected man, and fame
Said he was wealthy, or he had been so;
Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe;
But he was ever talking in such sort
As you do—far more sadly—he seemed hurt,
Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,
To hear but of the oppression of the strong,
Or those absurd deceits (I think with you
In some respects, you know) which carry through
The excellent impostors of this earth
When they outface detection—he had worth,
Poor fellow! but a humourist in his way'—
'Alas, what drove him mad?' 'I cannot say:
A lady came with him from France, and when
She left him and returned, he wandered then
About yon lonely isles of desert sand
Till he grew wild—he had no cash or land
Remaining,—the police had brought him here—
Some fancy took him and he would not bear
Removal; so I fitted up for him
Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,
And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers,
Which had adorned his life in happier hours,
And instruments of music—you may guess
A stranger could do little more or less
For one so gentle and unfortunate:
And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight
From madmen's chains, and make this Hell appear
A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.'—
'Nay, this was kind of you—he had no claim,
As the world says'—'None—but the very same
Which I on all mankind were I as he
Fallen to such deep reverse;—his melody
Is interrupted—now we hear the din
Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin;
Let us now visit him; after this strain
He ever communes with himself again,
And sees nor hears not any.' Having said
These words we called the keeper, and he led
To an apartment opening on the sea—
There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully
Near a piano, his pale fingers twined
One with the other, and the ooze and wind

madman = Shelley
he can say more
in this image

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237 far *Hunt MS.*; but *1824*. 270 nor *Hunt MS.*; and *1824*.

Rushed through an open casement, and did sway
His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray;
His head was leaning on a music book,
And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook;
His lips were pressed against a folded leaf
In hue too beautiful for health, and grief
Smiled in their motions as they lay apart—
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart
The eloquence of passion, soon he raised
His sad meek face and eyes lustrous and glazed
And spoke—sometimes as one who wrote, and thought
His words might move some heart that heeded not,
If sent to distant lands: and then as one
Reproaching deeds never to be undone
With wondering self-compassion; then his speech
Was lost in grief, and then his words came each
Unmodulated, cold, expressionless,—
But that from one jarred accent you might guess
It was despair made them so uniform:
And all the while the loud and gusty storm
Hissed through the window, and we stood behind
Stealing his accents from the envious wind
Unseen. I yet remember what he said
Distinctly: such impression his words made.

'Month after month,' he cried, 'to bear this load
And as a jade urged by the whip and goad
To drag life on, which like a heavy chain
Lengthens behind with many a link of pain!—
And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare
To give a human voice to my despair,
But live and move, and, wretched thing! smile on
As if I never went aside to groan,
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those
Who are most dear—not for my own repose—
Alas! no scorn or pain or hate could be
So heavy as that falsehood is to me—
But that I cannot bear more altered faces
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,
More misery, disappointment, and mistrust
To own me for their father . . . Would the dust
Were covered in upon my body now!
That the life ceased to toil within my brow!
And then these thoughts would at the least be fled;
Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

'What Power delights to torture us? I know
That to myself I do not wholly owe
What now I suffer, though in part I may.
Alas! none strewed sweet flowers upon the way

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292 cold *Hunt MS.*; and *1824.* 318 least *Hunt MS.*; last *1824.*
323 sweet *Hunt MS.*; fresh *1824.*

Where wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain
My shadow, which will leave me not again—
If I have erred, there was no joy in error,
But pain and insult and unrest and terror;
I have not as some do, bought penitence
With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence,
For then,—if love and tenderness and truth
Had overlived hope's momentary youth,
My creed should have redeemed me from repenting;
But loathèd scorn and outrage unrelenting
Met love excited by far other seeming
Until the end was gained . . . as one from dreaming
Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state
Such as it is.——
'O Thou, my spirit's mate
Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,
Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes
If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see—
My secret groans must be unheard by thee,
Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know
Thy lost friend's incommunicable woe.

'Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed
In friendship, let me not that name degrade
By placing on your hearts the secret load
Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road
To peace and that is truth, which follow ye!
Love sometimes leads astray to misery.
Yet think not though subdued—and I may well
Say that I am subdued—that the full Hell
Within me would infect the untainted breast
Of sacred nature with its own unrest;
As some perverted beings think to find
In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind
Which scorn or hate have wounded—O how vain!
The dagger heals not but may rend again . . .
Believe that I am ever still the same
In creed as in resolve, and what may tame
My heart, must leave the understanding free,
Or all would sink in this keen agony—
Nor dream that I will join the vulgar cry;
Or with my silence sanction tyranny;
Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain
In any madness which the world calls gain,
Ambition or revenge or thoughts as stern
As those which make me what I am; or turn
To avarice or misanthropy or lust . . .
Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust!
Till then the dungeon may demand its prey,

356 have *Hunt MS.*; hath *1824.* 361 in this keen *Hunt MS.*; under this *1824.* 362 cry *Hunt MS.*; eye *1824.*

And Poverty and Shame may meet and say—
Halting beside me on the public way—
"That love-devoted youth is ours—let's sit
Beside him—he may live some six months yet."
Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,
May ask some willing victim, or ye friends
May fall under some sorrow which this heart
Or hand may share or vanquish or avert;
I am prepared—in truth with no proud joy—
To do or suffer aught, as when a boy
I did devote to justice and to love
My nature, worthless now! . . .
'I must remove
A veil from my pent mind. 'Tis torn aside!
O, pallid as Death's dedicated bride,
Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,
Am I not wan like thee? at the grave's call
I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball
To greet the ghastly paramour, for whom
Thou hast deserted me . . . and made the tomb
Thy bridal bed . . . But I beside your feet
Will lie and watch ye from my winding sheet—
Thus . . . wide awake tho' dead . . . yet stay, O stay!
Go not so soon—I know not what I say—
Hear but my reasons . . I am mad, I fear,
My fancy is o'erwrought . . thou art not here . . .
Pale art thou, 'tis most true . . but thou art gone,
Thy work is finished . . . I am left alone!—

. . . .

'Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast
Which, like a serpent, thou envenomest
As in repayment of the warmth it lent?
Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?
Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought
That thou wert she who said, "You kiss me not
Ever, I fear you do not love me now"—
In truth I loved even to my overthrow
Her, who would fain forget these words: but they
Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

. . . .

'You say that I am proud—that when I speak
My lip is tortured with the wrongs which break
The spirit it expresses . . . Never one
Humbled himself before, as I have done!
Even the instinctive worm on which we tread
Turns, though it wound not—then with prostrate head
Sinks in the dusk and writhes like me—and dies?
No: wears a living death of agonies!

372 on *Hunt MS.*; in *1824*. 388 greet *Hunt MS.*; meet *1824*.
390 your *Hunt MS.*; thy *1824*.

As the slow shadows of the pointed grass
Mark the eternal periods, his pangs pass
Slow, ever-moving,—making moments be
As mine seem—each an immortality!

. . . .

'That you had never seen me—never heard
My voice, and more than all had ne'er endured
The deep pollution of my loathed embrace—
That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face—
That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out
The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root
With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne'er
Our hearts had for a moment mingled there
To disunite in horror—these were not
With thee, like some suppressed and hideous thought
Which flits athwart our musings, but can find
No rest within a pure and gentle mind . . .
Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,
And searedst my memory o'er them,—for I heard
And can forget not . . . they were ministered
One after one, those curses. Mix them up
Like self-destroying poisons in one cup,
And they will make one blessing which thou ne'er
Didst imprecate for, on me,—death.

. . . .

'It were
A cruel punishment for one most cruel,
If such can love, to make that love the fuel
Of the mind's hell; hate, scorn, remorse, despair:
But *me*—whose heart a stranger's tear might wear
As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone,
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
For woes which others hear not, and could see
The absent with the glance of phantasy,
And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,
Following the captive to his dungeon deep;
Me—who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth,
And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,
When all beside was cold—that thou on me
Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony—
Such curses are from lips once eloquent
With love's too partial praise—let none relent
Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name
Henceforth, if an example for the same
They seek . . . for thou on me lookedst so, and so—
And didst speak thus . . and thus . . . I live to show
How much men bear and die not!

. . . .

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417 his *Hunt MS.*; its *1824*. 446 glance *Hunt MS.*; glass *1824*.
447 with *Hunt MS.*; near *1824*.

'Thou wilt tell,
With the grimace of hate, how horrible
It was to meet my love when thine grew less;
Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address
Such features to love's work . . . this taunt, though true,
(For indeed Nature nor in form nor hue
Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)
Shall not be thy defence . . . for since thy lip
Met mine first, years long past, since thine eye kindled
With soft fire under mine, I have not dwindled
Nor changed in mind or body, or in aught
But as love changes what it loveth not
After long years and many trials.
'How vain
Are words! I thought never to speak again,
Not even in secret,—not to my own heart—
But from my lips the unwilling accents start,
And from my pen the words flow as I write,
Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears . . . my sight
Is dim to see that charactered in vain
On this unfeeling leaf which burns the brain
And eats into it . . . blotting all things fair
And wise and good which time had written there.

'Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
The work of their own hearts, and this must be
Our chastisement or recompense—O child!
I would that thine were like to be more mild
For both our wretched sakes . . . for thine the most
Who feelest already all that thou hast lost
Without the power to wish it thine again;
And as slow years pass, a funereal train
Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend
Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend
No thought on my dead memory?

. . . .

'Alas, love!
Fear me not . . . against thee I would not move
A finger in despite. Do I not live
That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve?
I give thee tears for scorn and love for hate;
And that thy lot may be less desolate
Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain
From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.
Then, when thou speakest of me, never say
"He could forgive not." Here I cast away
All human passions, all revenge, all pride;
I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide
Under these words, like embers, every spark

467 lip *Hunt MS.*; life *1824*. 483 this *Hunt MS.*; that *1824*.
493 I would *Hunt MS.*; I'd *1824*.

Of that which has consumed me—quick and dark
The grave is yawning . . . as its roof shall cover
My limbs with dust and worms under and over
So let Oblivion hide this grief . . . the air
Closes upon my accents, as despair
Upon my heart—let death upon despair!'

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile,
Then rising, with a melancholy smile
Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept
A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept
And muttered some familiar name, and we
Wept without shame in his society.
I think I never was impressed so much;
The man who were not, must have lacked a touch
Of human nature . . . then we lingered not,
Although our argument was quite forgot,
But calling the attendants, went to dine
At Maddalo's; yet neither cheer nor wine
Could give us spirits, for we talked of him
And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim;
And we agreed his was some dreadful ill
Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,
By a dear friend; some deadly change in love
Of one vowed deeply which he dreamed not of;
For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot
Of falsehood on his mind which flourished not
But in the light of all-beholding truth;
And having stamped this canker on his youth
She had abandoned him—and how much more
Might be his woe, we guessed not—he had store
Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess
From his nice habits and his gentleness;
These were now lost . . . it were a grief indeed
If he had changed one unsustaining reed
For all that such a man might else adorn.
The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn;
For the wild language of his grief was high,
Such as in measure were called poetry;
And I remember one remark which then
Maddalo made. He said: 'Most wretched men
Are cradled into poetry by wrong,
They learn in suffering what they teach in song.'

If I had been an unconnected man
I, from this moment, should have formed some plan
Never to leave sweet Venice,—for to me
It was delight to ride by the lone sea;
And then, the town is silent—one may write

510 despair *Hunt MS., 1824*; my care *1839*. 511 leant] *See Editor's Note.* 518 were *Hunt MS., 1824*; was *1839*. 525 his *Hunt MS.*; it *1824*. 530 on *Hunt MS.*; in *1824*. 537 were now *Hunt MS.*; now were *1824*.

Or read in gondolas by day or night,
Having the little brazen lamp alight,
Unseen, uninterrupted; books are there,
Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair
Which were twin-born with poetry, and all
We seek in towns, with little to recall
Regrets for the green country. I might sit
In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit
And subtle talk would cheer the winter night
And make me know myself, and the firelight
Would flash upon our faces, till the day
Might dawn and make me wonder at my stay:
But I had friends in London too: the chief
Attraction here, was that I sought relief
From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought
Within me—'twas perhaps an idle thought—
But I imagined that if day by day
I watched him, and but seldom went away,
And studied all the beatings of his heart
With zeal, as men study some stubborn art
For their own good, and could by patience find
An entrance to the caverns of his mind,
I might reclaim him from his dark estate:
In friendships I had been most fortunate—
Yet never saw I one whom I would call
More willingly my friend; and this was all
Accomplished not; such dreams of baseless good
Oft come and go in crowds or solitude
And leave no trace—but what I now designed
Made for long years impression on my mind.
The following morning, urged by my affairs,
I left bright Venice.
After many years
And many changes I returned; the name
Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same;
But Maddalo was travelling far away
Among the mountains of Armenia.
His dog was dead. His child had now become
A woman; such as it has been my doom
To meet with few,—a wonder of this earth,
Where there is little of transcendent worth,—
Like one of Shakespeare's women: kindly she,
And, with a manner beyond courtesy,
Received her father's friend; and when I asked
Of the lorn maniac, she her memory tasked,
And told as she had heard the mournful tale:
'That the poor sufferer's health began to fail
Two years from my departure, but that then
The lady who had left him, came again.

558 regrets *Hunt MS.*; regret *1824.* 569 but *Hunt MS.*; *wanting in edd. 1824 and 1839.* 574 his *1824*; this [?] *Hunt MS.*

Her mien had been imperious, but she now
Looked meek—perhaps remorse had brought her low.
Her coming made him better, and they stayed
Together at my father's—for I played,
As I remember, with the lady's shawl—
I might be six years old—but after all
She left him' . . . 'Why, her heart must have been tough:
How did it end?' 'And was not this enough?
They met—they parted'—'Child, is there no more?'
'Something within that interval which bore
The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met:
Yet if thine agèd eyes disdain to wet
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered tears,
Ask me no more, but let the silent years
Be closed and cered over their memory
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.'
I urged and questioned still, she told me how
All happened—but the cold world shall not know.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF JULIAN AND MADDALO

'What think you the dead are?' 'Why, dust and clay,
What should they be?' ''Tis the last hour of day.
Look on the west, how beautiful it is
Vaulted with radiant vapours! The deep bliss
Of that unutterable light has made
The edges of that cloud fade
Into a hue, like some harmonious thought,
Wasting itself on that which it had wrought,
Till it dies and between
The light hues of the tender, pure, serene,
And infinite tranquillity of heaven.
Ay, beautiful! but when not. . . .'

. . . .

'Perhaps the only comfort which remains
Is the unheeded clanking of my chains,
The which I make, and call it melody.'

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

From the Baths of Lucca, in 1818, Shelley visited Venice; and, circumstances rendering it eligible that we should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of that city, he accepted the offer of Lord Byron, who lent him the use of a villa he rented near Este; and he sent for his family from Lucca to join him.

I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk, a *pergola*, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall-door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the *Prometheus;* and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo.* A slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut-wood, at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode.

Our first misfortune, of the kind from which we soon suffered even more severely, happened here. Our little girl, an infant in whose small features I fancied that I traced great resemblance to her father, showed symptoms of suffering from the heat of the climate. Teething increased her illness and danger. We were at Este, and when we became alarmed, hastened to Venice for the best advice. When we arrived at Fusina, we found that we had forgotten our passport, and the soldiers on duty attempted to prevent our crossing the laguna; but they could not resist Shelley's impetuosity at such a moment. We had scarcely arrived at Venice before life fled from the little sufferer, and we returned to Este to weep her loss.

After a few weeks spent in this retreat, which was interspersed by visits to Venice, we proceeded southward.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA

IN FOUR ACTS

AUDISNE HAEC AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE?

[Composed at Este, Sept., Oct., 1818 (Act I); at Rome, March–April 6, 1819 (Acts II, III); at Florence, close of 1819 (Act IV). Published by C. and J. Ollier, London, summer of 1820. Sources of the text are (1) edition of 1820; (2) text in *P. W.*, 1839, prepared with the aid of a list of *errata* in (1) written out by Shelley; (3) a fair draft in Shelley's autograph, now in the Bodleian. This has been carefully collated by Mr. C. D. Locock, who prints the result in his *Examination of the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1903. Our text is that of 1820, modified by ed. 1839, and by the Bodleian fair copy. In the following notes B = the Bodleian MS.; 1820 = the *editio princeps*, printed by Marchant for C. and J. Ollier, London; and 1839 = the text as edited by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works*, 1st and 2nd edd., 1839. The reader should consult the notes on the Play at the end of the volume.]

PREFACE

The Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected; and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, 'a passion for reforming the world:' what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid;

and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Prometheus.
Demogorgon.
Jupiter.
The Earth.
Ocean.
Apollo.
Mercury.
Asia
Panthea } Oceanides.
Ione
Hercules.
The Phantasm of Jupiter.
The Spirit of the Earth.
The Spirit of the Moon.
Spirits of the Hours.

Spirits. Echoes. Fauns. Furies.

ACT I

Scene.—*A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.* Prometheus *is discovered bound to the Precipice.* Panthea *and* Ione *are seated at his feet. Time, night. During the Scene, morning slowly breaks.*

Prometheus. Monarch of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire:—
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?

I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
/Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin Drama begins
Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven! [illegible]
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror, [illegible]
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,
Through which the Sun walks burning without beams!
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbèd world! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

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54 thro' wide *B*; thro' the wide *1820*.

First Voice (from the Mountains).

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood:
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

Second Voice (from the Springs).

Thunderbolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
Thro' a city and a solitude.

Third Voice (from the Air).

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own,
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

Fourth Voice (from the Whirlwinds).

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder.

First Voice.

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

Second Voice.

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, 'Ah, woe is me!'
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

Third Voice.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven:
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

Fourth Voice.

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is as hell to us.

The Earth. The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,

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106 as hell *1839, B* a hell *1820*

Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'
Prometheus. I heard a sound of voices: not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams,
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me? me alone, who checked,
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!
The Earth. They dare not.
Prometheus. Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.
Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!
'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.
Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice
I only know that thou art moving near
And love. How cursed I him?
The Earth. How canst thou hear
Who knowest not the language of the dead?
Prometheus. Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.
The Earth. I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
Subtle thou art and good, and though the Gods
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,
Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now.
Prometheus. Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
Yet 'tis not pleasure.
The Earth. No, thou canst not hear:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
Only to those who die.
Prometheus. And what art thou,
O, melancholy Voice?
The Earth. I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree

137 And love *1820*; And lovest *cj. Swinburne.*

Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us: their inhabitants beheld
My spherèd light wane in wide Heaven; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer; ay, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words,
But dare not speak them.
Prometheus. Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.
The Earth. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods

Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.
Prometheus. Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil, pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

Ione.

My wings are folded o'er mine ears:
My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes:
Yet through their silver shade appears,
And through their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds;
May it be no ill to thee
O thou of many wounds!
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake.

Panthea.

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
His veinèd hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

Phantasm of Jupiter. Why have the secret powers of this strange world
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?
Prometheus. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

The Earth. Listen! And though your echoes must be mute,
Gray mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.
Phantasm. A spirit seizes me and speaks within:
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.
Panthea. See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven
Darkens above.
Ione. He speaks! O shelter me!
Prometheus. I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

Phantasm.

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate;
And thus devote to sleepless agony,
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou,
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!
I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.

An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour
Come, when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally;
And after many a false and fruitless crime
Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space and time.

Prometheus. Were these my words, O Parent?
The Earth. They were thine.
Prometheus. It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

The Earth.

Misery, Oh misery to me,
That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,
Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquishèd.

First Echo.

Lies fallen and vanquishèd!

Second Echo.

Fallen and vanquishèd!

Ione.

Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,
The Titan is unvanquished still.
But see, where through the azure chasm
Of yon forked and snowy hill
Trampling the slant winds on high
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
Under plumes of purple dye,
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
A Shape comes now,
Stretching on high from his right hand
A serpent-cinctured wand.

Panthea. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

Ione.

And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

Panthea.

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

Ione.

Are they now led, from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed?

Panthea.

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

First Fury. Ha! I scent life!
Second Fury. Let me but look into his eyes!
Third Fury. The hope of torturing him smells like a heap
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.
First Fury. Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer, Hounds
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent?
Mercury. Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.
First Fury. Oh, mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!
Mercury. Crouch then in silence.
Awful Sufferer!
To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.
Be it not so! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:

For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.
Prometheus. Evil minds
Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my hair:
Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.
Such is the tyrant's recompense: 'tis just:
He who is evil can receive no good;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:
He but requites me for his own misdeed.
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.
Mercury. Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?
Prometheus. I know but this, that it must come.
Mercury. Alas!
Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?
Prometheus. They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less
Do I desire or fear.
Mercury. Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved?
Prometheus. Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

Mercury. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while
Lapped in voluptuous joy?
Prometheus. I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.
Mercury. Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.
Prometheus. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!
Call up the fiends.
Ione. O, sister, look! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!
Mercury. I must obey his words and thine: alas!
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!
Panthea. See where the child of Heaven, with wingèd feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.
Ione. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.
First Fury. Prometheus!
Second Fury. Immortal Titan!
Third Fury. Champion of Heaven's slaves!
Prometheus. He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate.
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.
First Fury. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.
Prometheus. Oh! many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathèd selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?
Second Fury. We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!
Prometheus. Can aught exult in its deformity?
Second Fury. The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another: so are we.
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aëreal crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round,

Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.
Prometheus. I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.
First Fury. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?
Prometheus. Pain is my element, as hate is thine;
Ye rend me now: I care not.
Second Fury. Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?
Prometheus. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.
Third Fury. Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by one,
Like animal life, and though we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men:
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
Crawling like agony?
Prometheus. Why, ye are thus now;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

Chorus of Furies.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
Come, come, come!
Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;
Come, come, come!
Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead;
Leave the hatred, as in ashes
Fire is left for future burning:
It will burst in bloodier flashes
When ye stir it, soon returning:
Leave the self-contempt implanted
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,
Misery's yet unkindled fuel:
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted
To the maniac dreamer; cruel
More than ye can be with hate
Is he with fear.
Come, come, come!
We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate

And we burthen the blast of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

Ione. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.
Panthea. These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

First Fury.

Your call was as a wingèd car
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;
It rapped us from red gulfs of war.

Second Fury.

From wide cities, famine-wasted;

Third Fury.

Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

Fourth Fury.

Kingly conclaves stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

Fifth Fury.

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A Fury.

Speak not: whisper not:
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

A Fury.

Tear the veil!

Another Fury.

It is torn.

Chorus.

The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.
One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.
Look! where round the wide horizon
Many a million-peopled city

Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Hark that outcry of despair!
'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
Wailing for the faith he kindled:
Look again, the flames almost
To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
The survivors round the embers
Gather in dread.
Joy, joy, joy!
Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

Semichorus I.

Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.
Grant a little respite now:
See a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation;
To Truth its state is dedicate,
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;
A legioned band of linkèd brothers
Whom Love calls children—

Semichorus II.

'Tis another's:
See how kindred murder kin:
'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:
Till Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
[*All the* Furies *vanish, except one.*

Ione. Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?
Panthea. Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.
Ione. What didst thou see?
Panthea. A woful sight: a youth
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.
Ione. What next?
Panthea. The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts.
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

553 Hark *B*; Mark *1820*. 589 And *1820*; Tho' *B*.

Fury. Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.
Prometheus. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells:
Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.
Fury. Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.
Prometheus. Worse?
Fury. In each human heart terror survives
The ravin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man's estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do.
Prometheus. Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.
Fury. Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [*Vanishes.*
Prometheus. Ah woe!
Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
I am a God and cannot find it there,
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,

619 ravin *B, ed. 1839*; ruin *1820*.

This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things which are.
Panthea. Alas! what sawest thou more?
Prometheus. There are two woes:
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.
The Earth. I felt thy torture, son; with such mixed joy
As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding aether: they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future: may they speak comfort to thee!
Panthea. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air!
Ione. And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark! is it the music of the pines?
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?
Panthea. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

Chorus of Spirits.

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought:
Be it dim, and dank, and gray,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams;
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene,
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float through all above the grave;
We make there our liquid lair,

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646 thou more? *B*; thou? *1820*. 687 there *B, ed. 1839*; these *1820*.

Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Through the boundless element:
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee!

Ione. More yet come, one by one: the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

First Spirit.

/ On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
Till they faded through the sky;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 'twas the soul of Love;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

Second Spirit.

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immovably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half:
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

Third Spirit.

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame,
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade, its lustre made.

It has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet:
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

Fourth Spirit.

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aëreal kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

Ione.

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one belovèd nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

Panthea. Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.
Ione. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold:
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

Chorus of Spirits.

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

Fifth Spirit.

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I passed 'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of sadness,
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

Sixth Spirit.

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aëreal joy, and call the monster, Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

Chorus.

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and wingèd steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest through the air;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

Prometheus. Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

Chorus.

In the atmosphere we breathe,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
From Spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow:
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee.

Ione. Where are the Spirits fled?
Panthea. Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.
Prometheus. How fair these airborn shapes! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
Asia! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
All things are still: alas! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;

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774 lulling *B*; silent *1820*.

Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things:
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.
Panthea. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?
Prometheus. I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.
Panthea. Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the aether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus.*
ASIA *alone.*

Asia. From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!
O child of many winds! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.
This is the season, this the day, the hour;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come!
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl!
The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains: through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:

'Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow
The roseate sunlight quivers: hear I not
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn? [PANTHEA *enters.*
I feel, I see
Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears,
Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.
Belovèd and most beautiful, who wearest
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art! the spherèd sun had climbed
The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.
Panthea. Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noontide plumes of summer winds
Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:
But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.
Asia. Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.
Panthea. As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linkèd sleep.
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:
'Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.'
I lifted them: the overpowering light

Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere
Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm aether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate; though still
I listened through the night when sound was none.
Ione wakened then, and said to me:
'Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night?
I always knew what I desired before,
Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;
I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet
Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;
Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
And mingled it with thine: for when just now
We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
Quivered between our intertwining arms.'
I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.
  Asia. Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air: I feel them not: Oh, lift
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!
  Panthea. I lift them though they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express: what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?
  Asia. Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven
Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.
  Panthea. Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed?
  Asia. There is a change: beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape: 'tis He, arrayed
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread

Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.
Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build o'er the waste world? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us? Its rude hair
Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,
For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew
Whose stars the noon has quenched not.
Dream. Follow! Follow!
Panthea. It is mine other dream.
Asia. It disappears.
Panthea. It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!
Asia. As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among these lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;
And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;
And there was more which I remember not:
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by;
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire;
A wind arose among the pines; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard: O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!
And then I said: 'Panthea, look on me.'
But in the depth of those belovèd eyes
Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!
Echo. Follow, follow!
Panthea. The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices
As they were spirit-tongued.
Asia. It is some being
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list!

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122 moon *B*; morn *1820*. 126 o'er *B*; on *1820*.
143 these *B*; the *1820*.

Echoes (unseen).
Echoes we: listen!
We cannot stay:
As dew-stars glisten
Then fade away—
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
Of their aëreal tongues yet sound.
Panthea. I hear.

Echoes.
O, follow, follow,
As our voice recedeth
Through the caverns hollow,
Where the forest spreadeth;

(More distant.)
O, follow, follow!
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Through the noontide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint
And distant.
Panthea. List! the strain floats nearer now.

Echoes.
In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken;
Child of Ocean!

Asia. How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind!

Echoes.
O, follow, follow!
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noontide dew;
By the forest, lakes, and fountains,
Through the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now;
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

Scene II.—*A Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns.* Asia *and* Panthea *pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock listening.*

Semichorus I. of Spirits.

The path through which that lovely twain
Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew;
And bends, and then fades silently,
One frail and fair anemone:
Or when some star of many a one
That climbs and wanders through steep night,
Has found the cleft through which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon
Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:
And the gloom divine is all around,
And underneath is the mossy ground.

Semichorus II.

There the voluptuous nightingales,
Are awake through all the broad noonday.
When one with bliss or sadness fails,
And through the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom;
Another from the swinging blossom,
Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute;
When there is heard through the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounded flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

38 surrounded *B, ed. 1839*; surrounding *1820*.

Semichorus I.

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw:
And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined soft emotion,—
Attracts, impels them; those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey:
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet
And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

First Faun. Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

Second Faun. 'Tis hard to tell:
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

First Faun. If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

50 destined] destinied *1820.* 86 on *1820*; in *B.*

Second Faun. Ay, many more which we may well divine.
But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

Scene III.—A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains.

Asia *and* Panthea.

Panthea. Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift,
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
The voice which is contagion to the world.
Asia. Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!
How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Though evil stain its work, and it should be
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful!
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light,
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumèd caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines,
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!

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93 doom *B, ed. 1839*; dooms *1820*. 26 illumed *B*; illumined *1820*.

The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.
Panthea. Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.
Asia. The fragments of the cloud are scattered up;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain
Grows dizzy; see'st thou shapes within the mist?
Panthea. A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks!
Another and another: hark! they speak!

Song of Spirits.

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down!
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down!

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down!
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time both; to-day, to-morrow;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down!

Through the gray, void abysm,
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is One pervading, One alone,
Down, down!

In the depth of the deep,
Down, down!
Like veiled lightning asleep,

50 see'st thou *B.*; I see thin *1820*; I see *1839*.

Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.
Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee;
Down, down!
With the bright form beside thee;
Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
By that alone.

SCENE IV.—THE CAVE OF DEMOGORGON. ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

Panthea. What veilèd form sits on that ebon throne?
Asia. The veil has fallen.
Panthea. I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun.
—Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit.
Demogorgon. Ask what thou wouldst know.
Asia. What canst thou tell?
Demogorgon. All things thou dar'st demand.
Asia. Who made the living world?
Demogorgon. God.
Asia. Who made all
That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,
Imagination?
Demogorgon. God: Almighty God.
Asia. Who made that sense which, when the winds of Spring
In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one belovèd heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more?
Demogorgon. Merciful God.
Asia. And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech

Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?
Demogorgon. He reigns.
Asia. Utter his name: a world pining in pain
Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.
Demogorgon. He reigns.
Asia. I feel, I know it: who?
Demogorgon. He reigns.
Asia. Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;
And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe;

And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea:
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure aether shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain: but who rains down
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on,
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?
Not Jove: while yet his frown shook Heaven, ay, when
His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

Demogorgon. All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

Asia. Whom calledst thou God?

Demogorgon. I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

Asia. Who is the master of the slave?

Demogorgon. If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change? To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.

Asia. So much I asked before, and my heart gave

100 rains *B, ed. 1839*; reigns *1820*.

The response thou hast given; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.
One more demand; and do thou answer me
As mine own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive?
Demogorgon. Behold!
Asia. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night
I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.
Demogorgon. These are the immortal Hours,
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.
Asia. A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!
Spirit. I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.
Asia. What meanest thou?
Panthea. That terrible shadow floats
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night!
Asia. Thus I am answered: strange!
Panthea. See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures wingèd insects through the lampless air.

Spirit.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
 They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning
 They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
 They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
  I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
  We encircle the earth and the moon:
  We shall rest from long labours at noon:
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V.—*The Car pauses within a Cloud on the top of a snowy Mountain.* ASIA, PANTHEA, *and the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

Spirit.

On the brink of the night and the morning
  My coursers are wont to respire;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
  That their flight must be swifter than fire:
  They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

Asia. Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
Would give them swifter speed.
Spirit. Alas! it could not.
Panthea. Oh Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light
Which fills this cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.
Spirit. The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aëreal hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from thy mighty sister.
Panthea. Yes, I feel—
Asia. What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.
Panthea. How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veinèd shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Ægean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:
Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List! [*Music.*

9 this *B*; the *1820*. 22 thine *B*; thy *1820*.

Asia. Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God:
They who inspire it most are fortunate,
As I am now; but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long sufferings,
As I shall soon become.
Panthea. List! Spirits speak.

Voice in the Air, singing.

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
  With their love the breath between them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
  Make the cold air fire; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning
  Through the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning
  Through the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
  But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
  From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
  Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
  Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

Asia.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside a helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses!

54 limbs *B, ed. 1839*; lips *1820.*

Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound:

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven;
Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided:
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds and on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray:
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

SCENE I.—*Heaven.* JUPITER *on his Throne*; THETIS *and the other Deities assembled.*

Jupiter. Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me; alone
The soul of man, like unextinguished fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear;
And though my curses through the pendulous air,

96 winds and on *B*; winds on *1820*. 5 like unextinguished *B, ed. 1839*; like an unextinguished *1820*.

Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it; though under my wrath's night
It climbs the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet,
It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall:
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the destined hour arrive,
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend, and trample out the spark.
Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,
And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
As dew from earth under the twilight stars:
Drink! be the nectar circling through your veins
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
Till exultation burst in one wide voice
Like music from Elysian winds.
                                        And thou
Ascend beside me, veilèd in the light
Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
Thetis, bright image of eternity!
When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might!
God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
The penetrating presence; all my being,
Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw
Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
Sinking through its foundations:' even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
Griding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world,
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up
Olympus?

[*The Car of the* HOUR *arrives.* DEMOGORGON *descends, and moves towards the Throne of* JUPITER.

                    Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

Demogorgon. Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.

13 night *B, ed. 1839*; might *1820*. 20 destined *B, ed. 1839* distant *1820*.

The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might.
Jupiter. Detested prodigy!
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee! thou lingerest?
Mercy! mercy!
No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world? What then art thou?
No refuge! no appeal!
Sink with me then,
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,
And whelm on them into the bottomless void
This desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.
Ai! Ai!
The elements obey me not. I sink
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

SCENE II.—*The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis.* OCEAN *is discovered reclining near the Shore*; APOLLO *stands beside him.*

Ocean. He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?
Apollo. Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.
Ocean. He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void?
Apollo. An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded

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69 then *B, ed. 1839*; *om. 1820.*

By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aëreal ice clings over it.
  Ocean. Henceforth the fields of heaven-reflecting sea
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn
Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow
Round many-peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light-laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice
Of slavery and command; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
And sweetest music, such as spirits love.
  Apollo. And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits i' the morning star.
  Ocean.   Thou must away;
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell:
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.
                                        [*A sound of waves is heard.*
It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.
  Apollo.   Farewell.

SCENE III.—*Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, *the* EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, *and* PANTHEA, *borne in the Car with the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR. HERCULES *unbinds* PROMETHEUS, *who descends.*

  Hercules. Most glorious among Spirits, thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate, meaning of release
Minister like a slave.
  Prometheus.   Thy gentle words

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22 many-peopled *B*; many peopled *1820.* 26 light-laden *B*; light laden *1820.* 39 i' the *B, ed. 1839*; on the *1820.*

Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delayed.
Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, through your love and care:
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veinèd emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:
And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,
Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be;
And hither come, sped on the charmèd winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower aëreal Enna feeds,
At their known island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free;
And lovely apparitions,—dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality—
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal

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Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us
Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And, veil by veil, evil and error fall:
Such virtue has the cave and place around.
[*Turning to the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.
For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
Give her that curvèd shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.
Ione. Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell;
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?
Spirit. It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.
Prometheus. Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again
Outspeed the sun around the orbèd world;
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,
Loosening its mighty music; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then
Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.
And thou, O, Mother Earth!—
The Earth. I hear, I feel;
Thy lips are on me, and their touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy,
And through my withered, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair
Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
Draining the poison of despair, shall take
And interchange sweet nutriment; to me
Shall they become like sister-antelopes
By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers
Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose:

85 their *B*; thy *1820*. 102 unwithering *B, ed. 1839*; unwitting *1820*.

And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy:
And death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again.'
Asia. Oh, mother! wherefore speak the name of death?
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
Who die?
The Earth. It would avail not to reply:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
But to the uncommunicating dead.
Death is the veil which those who live call life:
They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even
The crag-built deserts of the barren deep.
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.
And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
Became mad too, and built a temple there,
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
The erring nations round to mutual war.
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
A violet's exhalation, and it fills
With a serener light and crimson air
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark linkèd ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
As they rain through them, and bright golden globes
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,
And through their veinèd leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
Stand ever mantling with aëreal dew,
The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
Arise! Appear!
[*A* Spirit *rises in the likeness of a winged child.*
This is my torch-bearer;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew

With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
And populous with most living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV.—*A Forest. In the Background a Cave.* PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, *and the* SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

Ione. Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass!
Knowest thou it?
Panthea. It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth through heaven. From afar
The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her

164 with most *B*; most with *1820*.

All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her—
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I—
Mother, dear mother.
The Spirit of the Earth (*running to Asia*). Mother, dearest mother;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?
Asia. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth
Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.
Spirit of the Earth. Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;
And happier too; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world:
And that, among the haunts of humankind,
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee),
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen.
Well, my path lately lay through a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it:
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate:
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;
A long, long sound, as it would never end:
And all the inhabitants leaped suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Passed floating through the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them; and those
From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms

After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn
Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,
Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue:
All things had put their evil nature off:
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;
So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.
Asia. And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
And love thee.
Spirit of the Earth. What; as Asia loves Prometheus?
Asia. Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With spherèd fires the interlunar air?
Spirit of the Earth. Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp
'Tis hard I should go darkling.
Asia. Listen; look!
[*The* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR *enters.*
Prometheus. We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.
Spirit of the Hour. [Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change: the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the spherèd world.

effect on universe of the overthrow of power of evil

My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe:
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire;
And where my moonlike car will stand within
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,—
In memory of the tidings it has borne,—

Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
And open to the bright and liquid sky.
Yoked to it by an amphisbaenic snake
The likeness of those wingèd steeds will mock
The flight from which they find repose. Alas,
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
When all remains untold which ye would hear?
As I have said, I floated to the earth:
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be; I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked,
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do,
None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
'All hope abandon ye who enter here;'
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein,

121 flight *B, ed. 1839*; light *1820*.

And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round,
These imaged to the pride of kings and priests
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,—
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain amid men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,—
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:
The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed or hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man abolition of
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, distinctions
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king good? or bad?
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless?—no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

natural end to poem — left unexpressed the joy of the world

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

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173 These *B*; Those *1820*. 187 amid *B*; among *1820*. 192 or *B*; and *1820*

ACT IV

Lyric transport

Scene.—*A Part of the Forest near the Cave of* Prometheus. Panthea *and* Ione *are sleeping: they awaken gradually during the first Song.*

Voice of unseen Spirits.

The pale stars are gone!
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling,
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye?

A Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly, singing.

Here, oh, here:
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancelled year!
Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew!
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!

Haste, oh, haste!
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony!

Ione.

What dark forms were they?

Panthea.

The past Hours weak and gray,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

Ione.

Have they passed?

Panthea.

They have passed;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled:

Ione.

Whither, oh, whither?

Panthea.

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

Voice of unseen Spirits.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye?

Ione. What charioteers are these?
Panthea. Where are their chariots?

Semichorus of Hours.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A Voice.

In the deep?

Semichorus II.

Oh, below the deep.

Semichorus I.

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth—

Semichorus II.

Worse than his visions were!

Semichorus I.

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams;
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

Semichorus II.

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

Chorus.

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A Voice.

Unite!

Panthea. See. where the Spirits of the human mind
Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

Chorus of Spirits.

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

Chorus of Hours.

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veilèd not?

Chorus of Spirits.

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;

From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews her Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

Chorus of Spirits and Hours.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

Chorus of Spirits.

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

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116 her *B*; his *1820*.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

Chorus of Hours.

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
Let some depart, and some remain.

Semichorus I.

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

Semichorus II.

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

Semichorus I.

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

Semichorus II.

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

Semichorus I.

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

Semichorus II.

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

Chorus of Hours and Spirits.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

Panthea. Ha! they are gone!
Ione. Yet feel you no delight
From the past sweetness?

Panthea. As the bare green hill
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky!
Ione. Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?
Panthea. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air
Æolian modulations.
Ione. Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

Charming

Panthea. But see where through two openings in the forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.
Ione. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the Mother of the Months is borne
By ebbing light into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams;
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods,
Distinctly seen through that dusk aery veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunderstorm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind;
Within it sits a wingèd infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured

208 light *B*; night *1820*. 212 aery *B*; airy *1820*. 225 strings *B, ed. 1839*; string *1820*.

From jaggèd clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
With fire that is not brightness; in its hand
It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.
  Panthea. And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aëreal mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.
  Ione. 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.
  Panthea. And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightenings,

242 white and green *B*; white, green *1820*. 274 spokes *B*, *ed. 1839*; spoke *1820*. 276 lightenings *B*; lightnings *1820*.

And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
Infinite mines of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poised
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags; and over these
The jaggèd alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,
'Be not!' And like my words they were no more.

The Earth.

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined!
Ha! ha! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

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280 mines *B*; mine *1820*. 282 poised *B*; poized *ed. 1839*; poured *1820*.

The Moon.

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody
Through me, through me!

The Earth.

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunderstones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,—

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire;
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire:

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Burst in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball.

The Moon.

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,

335–6 the abysses, And *1820, 1839*; the abysses Of *B.* 355 the *omitted 1820.*

And living shapes upon my bosom move:
Music is in the sea and air,
Wingèd clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
'Tis love, all love!

The Earth.

It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error,
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;
Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,
Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move:

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linkèd thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be!

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,

387 life *B*; light *1820*.

A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-wingèd ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear;
Language is a perpetual Orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

The Moon. so she said

The shadow of white death has passed
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

The Earth.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the moon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

The Moon.

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine!

The Earth.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

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432 unfrozen *B, ed. 1839*; infrozen *1820.*

The Moon.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given;
I, thy crystal paramour
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like of lovers' eyes;
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the weird Cadmæan forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or a chameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a gray and watery mist
Glows like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow—

The Earth.

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,

Through isles for ever calm;
Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.
Panthea. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.
Ione. Ah me! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.
Panthea. Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as darkness,
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.
Ione. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.
Panthea. An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

Demogorgon.

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

The Earth.

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

Demogorgon.

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

The Moon.

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

Demogorgon.

Ye Kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,
Aetherial Dominations, who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A Voice from above.

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

Demogorgon.

Ye happy Dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—

A Voice from beneath.

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

Demogorgon.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A confused Voice.

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

Demogorgon.

Spirits, whose homes are flesh: ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish; ye living leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:—

A Voice.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

Demogorgon.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay;
A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

All.

Speak: thy strong words may never pass away.

Demogorgon.

This is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;

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547 throng *1820*, *1839*; *cancelled for* feed B. 559 dread *B*, *ed. 1839*; dead *1820*.

These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

[First printed by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination of the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library*, 1903, pp. 33–7.]

(following I. 37)

When thou descendst each night with open eyes
In torture, for a tyrant seldom sleeps,
Thou never; . . . .
. . . . . .

(following I. 195)

Which thou henceforth art doomed to interweave
. . . .

(following the first two words of I. 342)

[Of Hell:] I placed it in his choice to be
The crown, or trampled refuse of the world
With but one law itself a glorious boon—
I gave—
. . . .

(following I. 707)

Second Spirit.

I leaped on the wings of the Earth-star damp
As it rose on the steam of a slaughtered camp—
The sleeping newt heard not our tramp
As swift as the wings of fire may pass—
We threaded the points of long thick grass
Which hide the green pools of the morass
But shook a water-serpent's couch
In a cleft skull, of many such
The widest; at the meteor's touch
The snake did seem to see in dream
Thrones and dungeons overthrown
Visions how unlike his own . . .
'Twas the hope the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee
. . . .

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575 falter *B, ed. 1839*; flatter *1820*.

(following II. i. 110)

Lift up thine eyes Panthea—they pierce they burn!

Panthea.

Alas! I am consumed—I melt away
The fire is in my heart—

Asia.

Thine eyes burn burn!—
Hide them within thine hair—

Panthea.

O quench thy lips
I sink I perish

Asia.

Shelter me now—they burn
It is his spirit in their orbs . . . my life
Is ebbing fast—I cannot speak—

Panthea.

Rest, rest!
Sleep death annihilation pain! aught else

. . . . . .

(following II. iv. 27)

Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm
And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within
Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony;

. . . . . .

UNCANCELLED PASSAGE

(following II. v. 71)

Asia.

You said that spirits spoke, but it was thee
Sweet sister, for even now thy curvèd lips
Tremble as if the sound were dying there
Not dead

Panthea.

Alas it was Prometheus spoke
Within me, and I know it must be so
I mixed my own weak nature with his love
. . . . . And my thoughts
Are like the many forests of a vale
Through which the might of whirlwind and of rain
Had passed—they rest rest through the evening light
As mine do now in thy belovèd smile.

CANCELLED STAGE DIRECTIONS

(following I. 221)

The sound beneath as of earthquake and the driving of whirlwinds—The Ravine is split, and the Phantasm of Jupiter rises, surrounded by heavy clouds which dart forth lightning.

(following I. 520)

enter rushing by groups of horrible forms; *they speak as they pass in chorus*

(following I. 552)

a shadow passes over the scene, and a piercing shriek is heard

NOTE ON PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, BY MRS. SHELLEY

On the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return. His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by a milder climate; he suffered very much during the winter previous to his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December, 1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying:

'My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and keen excitement that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack; and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, *it would be my duty* to go to Italy without delay. It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake—I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness; but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.'

In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached; but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country, and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of Nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

He went direct to Italy, avoiding even Paris, and did not make any pause till he arrived at Milan. The first aspect of Italy enchanted Shelley; it seemed a garden of delight placed beneath a clearer and brighter heaven than any he had lived under before. He wrote long descriptive letters during the first year of his residence in Italy, which, as compositions, are the most beautiful in the world, and show how truly he appreciated and studied the wonders of Nature and Art in that divine land.

The poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects as the groundwork for lyrical dramas. One was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the *Book of Job*, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the *Prometheus Unbound*. The Greek tragedians were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Æschylus filled him with wonder and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demi-gods: such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.

We spent a month at Milan, visiting the Lake of Como during that interval. Thence we passed in succession to Pisa, Leghorn, the Baths of Lucca, Venice, Este, Rome, Naples, and back again to Rome, whither we returned early in March, 1819. During all this time Shelley meditated the subject of his drama, and wrote portions of it. Other poems were composed during this interval, and while at the Bagni di Lucca he translated Plato's *Symposium*. But, though he diversified his studies, his thoughts centred in the *Prometheus*. At last, when at Rome, during a bright and beautiful Spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. These are little known to the ordinary visitor at Rome. He describes them in a letter, with that poetry and delicacy and truth of description which render his narrated impressions of scenery of unequalled beauty and interest.

At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition.

The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity: God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

> 'Brought death into the world
> and all our woe.'

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all—even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of Good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind, beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture, and set him free; and Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus—she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the benefactor of mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the Poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation—such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

Shelley develops, more particularly in the lyrics of this drama, his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the Creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of Mind and Nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.

More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real—to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery.

I find in one of his manuscript books some remarks on a line in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, which show at once the critical subtlety of Shelley's mind, and explain his apprehension of those 'minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us,' which he pronounces, in the letter quoted in the note to the *Revolt of Islam*, to comprehend all that is sublime in man.

'In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image,

> *Πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις* :

a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry; yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed!

> "Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought."

If the words *ὁδοὺς* and *πλάνοις* had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical instead of an absolute sense, as we say "*ways* and means," and "wanderings" for error and confusion. But they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet; and wanderings, such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert, or roams from city to city—as Œdipus, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol; a world within a world which he who seeks some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface.'

In reading Shelley's poetry, we often find similar verses, resembling, but not imitating the Greek in this species of imagery; for, though he adopted the style, he gifted it with that originality of form and colouring which sprung from his own genius.

In the *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on the *Revolt of Islam*[1]. The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this—it fills the mind as the most charming picture—we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the

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[1] While correcting the proof-sheets of that poem, it struck me that the poet had indulged in an exaggerated view of the evils of restored despotism; which, however injurious and degrading, were less openly sanguinary than the triumph of anarchy, such as it appeared in France at the close of the last century. But at this time a book, *Scenes of Spanish Life*, translated by Lieutenant Crawford from the German of Dr. Huber, of Rostock, fell into my hands. The account of the triumph of the priests and the serviles, after the French invasion of Spain in 1823, bears a strong and frightful resemblance to some of the descriptions of the massacre of the patriots in the *Revolt of Islam*.

> 'cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds
> Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
> A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
> Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
> And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
> Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
> With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
> As if the thing they loved fled on before,
> And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
> Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
> Sweep onward.'

Through the whole poem there reigns a sort of calm and holy spirit of love; it soothes the tortured, and is hope to the expectant, till the prophecy is fulfilled, and Love, untainted by any evil, becomes the law of the world.

England had been rendered a painful residence to Shelley, as much by the sort of persecution with which in those days all men of liberal opinions were visited, and by the injustice he had lately endured in the Court of Chancery, as by the symptoms of disease which make him regard a visit to Italy as necessary to prolong his life. An exile, and strongly impressed with the feeling that the majority of his countrymen regarded him with sentiments of aversion such as his own heart could experience towards none, he sheltered himself from such disgusting and painful thoughts in the calm retreats of poetry, and built up a world of his own—with the more pleasure, since he hoped to induce some one or two to believe that the earth might become such, did mankind themselves consent. The charm of the Roman climate helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before. And, as he wandered among the ruins made one with Nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself. There are many passages in the *Prometheus* which show the intense delight he received from such studies, and give back the impression with a beauty of poetical description peculiarly his own. He felt this, as a poet must feel when he satisfies himself by the result of his labours; and he wrote from Rome, 'My *Prometheus Unbound* is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts.'

I may mention, for the information of the more critical reader, that the verbal alterations in this edition of *Prometheus* are made from a list of errata written by Shelley himself.

THE CENCI

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

[Composed at Rome and near Leghorn (Villa Valsovano), May–August 8, 1819; published 1820 (spring) by C. & J. Ollier, London. This edition of two hundred and fifty copies was printed in Italy 'because,' writes Shelley to Peacock, Sept. 21, 1819, 'it costs, with all duties and freightage, about half what it would cost in London.' A Table of Errata in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting is printed by Forman in *The Shelley Library*, p. 91. A second edition, published by Ollier in 1821 (C. H. Reynell, printer), embodies the corrections indicated in this Table. No MS. of *The Cenci* is known to exist. Our text follows that of the second edition (1821); variations of the first (Italian) edition, the title-page of which bears date 1819, are given in the footnotes. The text of the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st and 2nd edd. (Mrs. Shelley), follows for the most part that of the *editio princeps* of 1819.]

DEDICATION, TO LEIGH HUNT, Esq.

My dear Friend—I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew: and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you! Your affectionate friend,

Percy B. Shelley.

Rome, *May* 29, 1819.

PREFACE

A MANUSCRIPT was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city during the Pontificate of Clement VIII, in the year 1599. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue[1]. Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions, and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of *La Cenci*.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions, *King Lear* and the two plays in which the tale of Œdipus is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakspeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

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[1] The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness; so that the communication of the MS. had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered, consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and men which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his Palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature[1].

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men, and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted; I need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

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[1] An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio* of Calderon; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eyebrows are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the Palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open-work. One of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Count Francesco Cenci.
Giacomo, } *his Sons.*
Bernardo, }
Cardinal Camillo.
Orsino, *a Prelate.*

Savella, *the Pope's Legate.*
Olimpio, } *Assassins.*
Marzio, }
Andrea, *Servant to Cenci.*
Nobles, Judges, Guards, Servants.

Lucretia, *Wife of* Cenci, *and Step-mother of his children.*
Beatrice, *his Daughter.*

The Scene lies principally in Rome, but changes during the Fourth Act to Petrella, a castle among the Apulian Apennines.

Time. During the Pontificate of Clement VIII.

ACT I

Scene I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.*

Enter Count Cenci, *and* Cardinal Camillo.

Camillo. That matter of the murder is hushed up
If you consent to yield his Holiness
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.—
It needed all my interest in the conclave
To bend him to this point: he said that you
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell
An erring soul which might repent and live:—
But that the glory and the interest
Of the high throne he fills, little consist
With making it a daily mart of guilt
As manifold and hideous as the deeds
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.
Cenci. The third of my possessions—let it go!
Ay, I once heard the nephew of the Pope
Had sent his architect to view the ground,
Meaning to build a villa on my vines
The next time I compounded with his uncle:
I little thought he should outwit me so!
Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see
That which the vassal threatened to divulge
Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.
The deed he saw could not have rated higher
Than his most worthless life:—it angers me!
Respited me from Hell!—So may the Devil
Respite their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Clement,
And his most charitable nephews, pray
That the Apostle Peter and the Saints
Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy
Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days

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13 As *ed. 1821*; So *edd. 1819, 1839*. 25 Than *ed. 1839*; That *edd. 1819, 1821*. 26 Respited me from *ed. 1821*; Respited from *edd. 1819, 1839*.

Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards
Of their revenue.—But much yet remains
To which they show no title.
Camillo. Oh, Count Cenci!
So much that thou mightst honourably live
And reconcile thyself with thine own heart
And with thy God, and with the offended world.
How hideously look deeds of lust and blood
Through those snow white and venerable hairs!—
Your children should be sitting round you now,
But that you fear to read upon their looks
The shame and misery you have written there.
Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter?
Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else
Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.
Why is she barred from all society
But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?
Talk with me, Count,—you know I mean you well.
I stood beside your dark and fiery youth
Watching its bold and bad career, as men
Watch meteors, but it vanished not—I marked
Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now
Do I behold you in dishonoured age
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.
Yet I have ever hoped you would amend,
And in that hope have saved your life three times.
Cenci. For which Aldobrandino owes you now
My fief beyond the Pincian.—Cardinal,
One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,
And so we shall converse with less restraint.
A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter—
He was accustomed to frequent my house;
So the next day *his* wife and daughter came
And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:
I think they never saw him any more.
Camillo. Thou execrable man, beware!—
Cenci. Of thee?
Nay this is idle:—We should know each other.
As to my character for what men call crime
Seeing I please my senses as I list,
And vindicate that right with force or guile,
It is a public matter, and I care not
If I discuss it with you. I may speak
Alike to you and my own conscious heart—
For you give out that you have half reformed me,
Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent
If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt.
All men delight in sensual luxury,
All men enjoy revenge; and most exult
Over the tortures they can never feel—
Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.

But I delight in nothing else. I love
The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,
When this shall be another's, and that mine.
And I have no remorse and little fear,
Which are, I think, the checks of other men.
This mood has grown upon me, until now
Any design my captious fancy makes
The picture of its wish, and it forms none
But such as men like you would start to know,
Is as my natural food and rest debarred
Until it be accomplished.
Camillo. Art thou not
Most miserable?
Cenci. Why, miserable?—
No.—I am what your theologians call
Hardened;—which they must be in impudence,
So to revile a man's peculiar taste.
True, I was happier than I am, while yet
Manhood remained to act the thing I thought;
While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now
Invention palls:—Ay, we must all grow old—
And but that there yet remains a deed to act
Whose horror might make sharp an appetite
Duller than mine—I'd do—I know not what.
When I was young I thought of nothing else
But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets:
Men, by St. Thomas! cannot live like bees,
And I grew tired:—yet, till I killed a foe,
And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,
Knew I not what delight was else on earth,
Which now delights me little. I the rather
Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals,
The dry fixed eyeball; the pale quivering lip,
Which tell me that the spirit weeps within
Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.
I rarely kill the body, which preserves,
Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,
Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear
For hourly pain.
Camillo. Hell's most abandoned fiend
Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,
Speak to his heart as now you speak to me;
I thank my God that I believe you not.

Enter ANDREA.

Andrea. My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca
Would speak with you.
Cenci. Bid him attend me in
The grand saloon. [*Exit* ANDREA.
Camillo. Farewell; and I will pray

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100 And but that *ed. 1821*; But that *edd. 1819, 1839*.

Almighty God that thy false, impious words
Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee. [*Exit* Camillo.
Cenci. The third of my possessions! I must use
Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,
Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday
There came an order from the Pope to make
Fourfold provision for my cursèd sons;
Whom I had sent from Rome to Salamanca,
Hoping some accident might cut them off;
And meaning if I could to starve them there.
I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them!
Bernardo and my wife could not be worse
If dead and damned:—then, as to Beatrice—
[*Looking around him suspiciously.*
I think they cannot hear me at that door;
What if they should? And yet I need not speak
Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.
O, thou most silent air, that shalt not hear
What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread
Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk
Of my imperious step scorning surprise,
But not of my intent!—Andrea!

Enter Andrea.

Andrea. My lord?
Cenci. Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber
This evening:—no, at midnight and alone. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—*A Garden of the Cenci Palace. Enter* Beatrice *and* Orsino, *as in conversation.*

Beatrice. Pervert not truth,
Orsino. You remember where we held
That conversation;—nay, we see the spot
Even from this cypress;—two long years are past
Since, on an April midnight, underneath
The moonlight ruins of mount Palatine,
I did confess to you my secret mind.
Orsino. You said you loved me then.
Beatrice. You are a Priest,
Speak to me not of love.
Orsino. I may obtain
The dispensation of the Pope to marry.
Because I am a Priest do you believe
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?
Beatrice. As I have said, speak to me not of love;
Had you a dispensation I have not;
Nor will I leave this home of misery
Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady

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131 Whom I had *ed. 1821*; Whom I have *edd. 1819, 1839.* 140 that shalt *ed. 1821*; that shall *edd. 1819, 1839.*

To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts,
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.
Alas, Orsino! All the love that once
I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.
Ours was a youthful contract, which you first
Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.
And thus I love you still, but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;
And so I swear a cold fidelity.
And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.
You have a sly, equivocating vein
That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am!
Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me
As you were not my friend, and as if you
Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles
Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.
Ah, no! forgive me; sorrow makes me seem
Sterner than else my nature might have been;
I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,
And they forbode,—but what can they forbode
Worse than I now endure?
Orsino. All will be well.
Is the petition yet prepared? You know
My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice;
Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill
So that the Pope attend to your complaint.
Beatrice. Your zeal for all I wish;—Ah me, you are cold!
Your utmost skill . . . speak but one word . . . (*aside*) Alas!
Weak and deserted creature that I am,
Here I stand bickering with my only friend! [*To* Orsino.
This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,
Orsino; he has heard some happy news
From Salamanca, from my brothers there,
And with this outward show of love he mocks
His inward hate. 'Tis bold hypocrisy,
For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,
Which I have heard him pray for on his knees:
Great God! that such a father should be mine!
But there is mighty preparation made,
And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,
And all the chief nobility of Rome.
And he has bidden me and my pale Mother
Attire ourselves in festival array.
Poor lady! She expects some happy change
In his dark spirit from this act; I none.
At supper I will give you the petition:
Till when—farewell.
Orsino. Farewell. (*Exit* Beatrice.) I know the Pope
Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow
But by absolving me from the revenue

24 And thus *edd. 1821, 1839*; And yet *ed. 1819*.

Of many a wealthy see; and, Beatrice,
I think to win thee at an easier rate.
Nor shall he read her eloquent petition:
He might bestow her on some poor relation
Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister,
And I should be debarred from all access.
Then as to what she suffers from her father,
In all this there is much exaggeration:—
Old men are testy and will have their way;
A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,
And live a free life as to wine or women,
And with a peevish temper may return
To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;
Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.
I shall be well content if on my conscience
There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer
From the devices of my love—a net
From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear
Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,
Whose beams anatomize me nerve by nerve
And lay me bare, and make me blush to see
My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no! A friendless girl
Who clings to me, as to her only hope:—
I were a fool, not less than if a panther
Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye,
If she escape me. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace. A Banquet.* *Enter* CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.

Cenci. Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome ye,
Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church,
Whose presence honours our festivity.
I have too long lived like an anchorite,
And in my absence from your merry meetings
An evil word is gone abroad of me;
But I do hope that you, my noble friends,
When you have shared the entertainment here,
And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,
And we have pledged a health or two together,
Will think me flesh and blood as well as you;
Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,
But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.
First Guest. In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart,
Too sprightly and companionable a man,
To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.
(*To his Companion.*) I never saw such blithe and open cheer
In any eye!
Second Guest. Some most desired event,
In which we all demand a common joy,

75 vassal *ed. 1821*; slave *ed. 1819*.

Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count.
Cenci. It is indeed a most desired event.
If, when a parent from a parent's heart
Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,
And when he rises up from dreaming it;
One supplication, one desire, one hope,
That he would grant a wish for his two sons,
Even all that he demands in their regard—
And suddenly beyond his dearest hope
It is accomplished, he should then rejoice,
And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,
And task their love to grace his merriment,—
Then honour me thus far—for I am he.
Beatrice (*to* LUCRETIA). Great God! How horrible! Some dreadful ill
Must have befallen my brothers.
Lucretia. Fear not, Child,
He speaks too frankly.
Beatrice. Ah! My blood runs cold.
I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.
Cenci. Here are the letters brought from Salamanca;
Beatrice, read them to your mother. God!
I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,
By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.
My disobedient and rebellious sons
Are dead!—Why, dead!—What means this change of cheer?
You hear me not, I tell you they are dead;
And they will need no food or raiment more:
The tapers that did light them the dark way
Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not
Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.
Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad.
[LUCRETIA *sinks, half fainting;* BEATRICE *supports her.*
Beatrice. It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.
Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,
He would not live to boast of such a boon.
Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.
Cenci. Ay, as the word of God; whom here I call
To witness that I speak the sober truth;—
And whose most favouring Providence was shown
Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco
Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,
When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy,
The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano
Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,
Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;
All in the self-same hour of the same night;
Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.
I beg those friends who love me, that they mark

The day a feast upon their calendars.
It was the twenty-seventh of December:
Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.
[*The Assembly appears confused; several of the guests rise.*
First Guest. Oh, horrible! I will depart—
Second Guest. And I.—
Third Guest. No, stay!
I do believe it is some jest; though faith!
'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.
I think his son has married the Infanta,
Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado;
'Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay!
I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.
Cenci (*filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up*). Oh, thou bright wine whose purple splendour leaps
And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl
Under the lamplight, as my spirits do,
To hear the death of my accursèd sons!
Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,
Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,
And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,
Who, if a father's curses, as men say,
Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,
And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,
Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art
Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,
And I will taste no other wine to-night.
Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around.
A Guest (*rising*). Thou wretch!
Will none among this noble company
Check the abandoned villain?
Camillo. For God's sake
Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane,
Some ill will come of this.
Second Guest. Seize, silence him!
First Guest. I will!
Third Guest. And I!
Cenci (*addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture*). Who moves? Who speaks?
(*turning to the Company*)
'tis nothing,
Enjoy yourselves.—Beware! For my revenge
Is as the sealed commission of a king
That kills, and none dare name the murderer.
[*The Banquet is broken up; several of the Guests are departing.*
Beatrice. I do entreat you, go not, noble guests;
What, although tyranny and impious hate
Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair?
What, if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs
Who tortures them, and triumphs? What, if we,
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,

His children and his wife, whom he is bound
To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find
No refuge in this merciless wide world?
O think what deep wrongs must have blotted out
First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind,
Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! O think!
I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand
Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke
Was perhaps some paternal chastisement!
Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt
Remained, have sought by patience, love, and tears
To soften him, and when this could not be
I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights
And lifted up to God, the Father of all,
Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard
I have still borne,—until I meet you here,
Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast
Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,
His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,
Ye may soon share such merriment again
As fathers make over their children's graves.
O Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman,
Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain,
Camillo, thou art chief justiciary,
Take us away!

Cenci. (*He has been conversing with* Camillo *during the first part of* Beatrice's *speech; he hears the conclusion, and now advances.*) I hope my good friends here
Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps
Of their own throats—before they lend an ear
To this wild girl.

Beatrice (*not noticing the words of Cenci*). Dare no one look on me?
None answer? Can one tyrant overbear
The sense of many best and wisest men?
Or is it that I sue not in some form
Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?
O God! That I were buried with my brothers!
And that the flowers of this departed spring
Were fading on my grave! And that my father
Were celebrating now one feast for all!

Camillo. A bitter wish for one so young and gentle;
Can we do nothing?

Colonna. Nothing that I see.
Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:
Yet I would second any one.

A Cardinal. And I.

Cenci. Retire to your chamber, insolent girl!

Beatrice. Retire thou, impious man! Ay, hide thyself
Where never eye can look upon thee more!

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132 no *ed. 1821*; not *ed.* 1819.

Wouldst thou have honour and obedience
Who art a torturer? Father, never dream
Though thou mayst overbear this company,
But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me!
Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks
My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat!
Cover thy face from every living eye,
And start if thou but hear a human step:
Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,
Bow thy white head before offended God,
And we will kneel around, and fervently
Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.
Cenci. My friends, I do lament this insane girl
Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.
Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer
Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.
Another time.— [*Exeunt all but* Cenci *and* Beatrice.
My brain is swimming round;
Give me a bowl of wine! [*To* Beatrice.
Thou painted viper!
Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible!
I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,
Now get thee from my sight! [*Exit* Beatrice.
Here, Andrea,
Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said
I would not drink this evening; but I must;
For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail
With thinking what I have decreed to do.—
[*Drinking the wine.*
Be thou the resolution of quick youth
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,
And age's firm, cold, subtle villainy;
As if thou wert indeed my children's blood
Which I did thirst to drink! The charm works well;
It must be done; it shall be done, I swear! [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

Scene I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter* Lucretia *and* Bernardo.

Lucretia. Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he
Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.
O God, Almighty, do Thou look upon us,
We have no other friend but only Thee!
Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,
I am not your true mother.
Bernardo. O more, more,
Than ever mother was to any child,

That have you been to me! Had he not been
My father, do you think that I should weep!
Lucretia. Alas! Poor boy, what else couldst thou have done?

Enter Beatrice.

Beatrice (*in a hurried voice*). Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?
Ah, no! that is his step upon the stairs;
'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;
Mother, if I to thee have ever been
A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,
Whose image upon earth a father is,
Dost Thou indeed abandon me? He comes;
The door is opening now; I see his face;
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,
Even as he did after the feast last night.

Enter a Servant.

Almighty God, how merciful Thou art!
'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?
Servant. My master bids me say, the Holy Father
Has sent back your petition thus unopened. [*Giving a paper.*
And he demands at what hour 'twere secure
To visit you again?
Lucretia. At the Ave Mary. [*Exit Servant.*
So, daughter, our last hope has failed; Ah me!
How pale you look; you tremble, and you stand
Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation,
As if one thought were over strong for you:
Your eyes have a chill glare; O, dearest child!
Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.
Beatrice. You see I am not mad: I speak to you.
Lucretia. You talked of something that your father did
After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse
Than when he smiled, and cried, 'My sons are dead!'
And every one looked in his neighbour's face
To see if others were as white as he?
At the first word he spoke I felt the blood
Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;
And when it passed I sat all weak and wild;
Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words
Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see
The devil was rebuked that lives in him.
Until this hour thus have you ever stood
Between us and your father's moody wrath
Like a protecting presence: your firm mind
Has been our only refuge and defence:
What can have thus subdued it? What can now
Have given you that cold melancholy look,
Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?
Beatrice. What is it that you say? I was just thinking
'Twere better not to struggle any more.

Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody,
Yet never—Oh! Before worse comes of it
'Twere wise to die: it ends in that at last.
Lucretia. Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once
What did your father do or say to you?
He stayed not after that accursèd feast
One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.
Bernardo. Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!
Beatrice (*speaking very slowly with a forced calmness*). It was one word, Mother, one little word;
One look, one smile. (*Wildly.*) Oh! He has trampled me
Under his feet, and made the blood stream down
My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all
Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh
Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,
And we have eaten.—He has made me look
On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust
Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,
And I have never yet despaired—but now!
What could I say? [*Recovering herself.*
Ah, no! 'tis nothing new.
The sufferings we all share have made me wild:
He only struck and cursed me as he passed;
He said, he looked, he did;—nothing at all
Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.
Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,
I should preserve my senses for your sake.
Lucretia. Nay, Beatrice; have courage, my sweet girl,
If any one despairs it should be I
Who loved him once, and now must live with him
Till God in pity call for him or me.
For you may, like your sister, find some husband,
And smile, years hence, with children round your knees;
Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil
Shall be remembered only as a dream.
Beatrice. Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.
Did you not nurse me when my mother died?
Did you not shield me and that dearest boy?
And had we any other friend but you
In infancy, with gentle words and looks,
To win our father not to murder us?
And shall I now desert you? May the ghost
Of my dead Mother plead against my soul
If I abandon her who filled the place
She left, with more, even, than a mother's love!
Bernardo. And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,
Even though the Pope should make me free to live
In some blithe place, like others of my age,
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.
Oh, never think that I will leave you, Mother!
Lucretia. My dear, dear children!

Enter CENCI, *suddenly.*

Cenci. What, Beatrice here!
Come hither! [*She shrinks back, and covers her face.*
Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair;
Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look
With disobedient insolence upon me,
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide
That which I came to tell you—but in vain.

Beatrice (*wildly, staggering towards the door*). O that the earth would gape! Hide me, O God!

Cenci. Then it was I whose inarticulate words
Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.
Stay, I command you—from this day and hour
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind;
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber!
Thou too, loathed image of thy cursèd mother,
[*To* BERNARDO.
Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate!
[*Exeunt* BEATRICE *and* BERNARDO.
(*Aside.*) So much has passed between us as must make
Me bold, her fearful.—'Tis an awful thing
To touch such mischief as I now conceive:
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in . . .
How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

Lucretia (*advancing timidly towards him*). O husband! Pray forgive poor Beatrice.
She meant not any ill.

Cenci. Nor you perhaps?
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote
Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred
Enmity up against me with the Pope?
Whom in one night merciful God cut off:
Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill.
You were not here conspiring? You said nothing
Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;
Or be condemned to death for some offence,
And you would be the witnesses?—This failing,
How just it were to hire assassins, or
Put sudden poison in my evening drink?
Or smother me when overcome by wine?
Seeing we had no other judge but God,
And He had sentenced me, and there were none
But you to be the executioners
Of His decree enregistered in Heaven?

Oh, no! You said not this?
Lucretia. So help me God,
I never thought the things you charge me with!
Cenci. If you dare speak that wicked lie again
I'll kill you. What! It was not by your counsel
That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?
You did not hope to stir some enemies
Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn
What every nerve of you now trembles at?
You judged that men were bolder than they are;
Few dare to stand between their grave and me.
Lucretia. Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation
I knew not aught that Beatrice designed;
Nor do I think she designed any thing
Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.
Cenci. Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this!
But I will take you where you may persuade
The stones you tread on to deliver you:
For men shall there be none but those who dare
All things—not question that which I command.
On Wednesday next I shall set out: you know
That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella:
'Tis safely walled, and moated round about:
Its dungeons underground, and its thick towers
Never told tales; though they have heard and seen
What might make dumb things speak.—Why do you linger?
Make speediest preparation for the journey! [*Exit* LUCRETIA.
The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear
A busy stir of men about the streets;
I see the bright sky through the window panes:
It is a garish, broad, and peering day;
Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears,
And every little corner, nook, and hole
Is penetrated with the insolent light.
Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me?
And wherefore should I wish for night, who do
A deed which shall confound both night and day?
'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist
Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven
She shall not dare to look upon its beams;
Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night;
The act I think shall soon extinguish all
For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom
Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,
Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,
In which I walk secure and unbeheld
Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Vatican. Enter* CAMILLO
and GIACOMO, *in conversation.*

Camillo. There is an obsolete and doubtful law
By which you might obtain a bare provision

Of food and clothing—
Giacomo. Nothing more? Alas!
Bare must be the provision which strict law
Awards, and agèd, sullen avarice pays.
Why did my father not apprentice me
To some mechanic trade? I should have then
Been trained in no highborn necessities
Which I could meet not by my daily toil.
The eldest son of a rich nobleman
Is heir to all his incapacities;
He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,
Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once
From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food,
An hundred servants, and six palaces,
To that which nature doth indeed require?—
Camillo. Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.
Giacomo. 'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I
Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,
Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father
Without a bond or witness to the deed:
And children, who inherit her fine senses,
The fairest creatures in this breathing world;
And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,
Do you not think the Pope would interpose
And stretch authority beyond the law?
Camillo. Though your peculiar case is hard, I know
The Pope will not divert the course of law.
After that impious feast the other night
I spoke with him, and urged him then to check
Your father's cruel hand; he frowned and said,
'Children are disobedient, and they sting
Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,
Requiting years of care with contumely.
I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;
His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,
And thus he is exasperated to ill.
In the great war between the old and young
I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,
Will keep at least blameless neutrality.'

Enter Orsino.

You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words.
Orsino. What words?
Giacomo. Alas, repeat them not again!
There then is no redress for me, at least
None but that which I may achieve myself,
Since I am driven to the brink.—But, say,
My innocent sister and my only brother
Are dying underneath my father's eye.
The memorable torturers of this land,
Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,
Never inflicted on the meanest slave

What these endure; shall they have no protection?
Camillo. Why, if they would petition to the Pope
I see not how he could refuse it—yet
He holds it of most dangerous example
In aught to weaken the paternal power,
Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.
I pray you now excuse me. I have business
That will not bear delay. [*Exit* CAMILLO.
Giacomo. But you, Orsino,
Have the petition: wherefore not present it?
Orsino. I have presented it, and backed it with
My earnest prayers, and urgent interest;
It was returned unanswered. I doubt not
But that the strange and execrable deeds
Alleged in it—in truth they might well baffle
Any belief—have turned the Pope's displeasure
Upon the accusers from the criminal:
So I should guess from what Camillo said.
Giacomo. My friend, that palace-walking devil Gold
Has whispered silence to his Holiness:
And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire.
What should we do but strike ourselves to death?
For he who is our murderous persecutor
Is shielded by a father's holy name,
Or I would— [*Stops abruptly.*
Orsino. What? Fear not to speak your thought.
Words are but holy as the deeds they cover:
A priest who has forsworn the God he serves;
A judge who makes Truth weep at his decree;
A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,
But as the mantle of some selfish guile;
A father who is all a tyrant seems,
Were the profaner for his sacred name.
Giacomo. Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain
Feigns often what it would not; and we trust
Imagination with such phantasies
As the tongue dares not fashion into words,
Which have no words, their horror makes them dim
To the mind's eye.—My heart denies itself
To think what you demand.
Orsino. But a friend's bosom
Is as the inmost cave of our own mind
Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day,
And from the all-communicating air.
You look what I suspected—
Giacomo. Spare me now!
I am as one lost in a midnight wood,
Who dares not ask some harmless passenger
The path across the wilderness, lest he,
As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.

77 makes Truth *ed. 1821*; makes the truth *edd. 1819, 1839.*

I know you are my friend, and all I dare
Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.
But now my heart is heavy, and would take
Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.
Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!
I would that to my own suspected self
I could address a word so full of peace.
Orsino. Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold. [*Exit* Giacomo.
I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo
To feed his hope with cold encouragement:
It fortunately serves my close designs
That 'tis a trick of this same family
To analyse their own and other minds.
Such self-anatomy shall teach the will
Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,
Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,
Into the depth of darkest purposes:
So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,
Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,
And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,
Show a poor figure to my own esteem,
To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do
As little mischief as I can; that thought
Shall fee the accuser conscience.
(*After a pause.*) Now what harm
If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered,
Wherefore by me? And what if I could take
The profit, yet omit the sin and peril
In such an action? Of all earthly things
I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;
And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives
His daughter's dowry were a secret grave
If a priest wins her.—Oh, fair Beatrice!
Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee
Could but despise danger and gold and all
That frowns between my wish and its effect,
Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape . . .
Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,
And follows me to the resort of men,
And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,
So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire;
And if I strike my damp and dizzy head
My hot palm scorches it: her very name,
But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart
Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably
I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights
Till weak imagination half possesses
The self-created shadow. Yet much longer
Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:
From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo

I must work out my own dear purposes.
I see, as from a tower, the end of all:
Her father dead; her brother bound to me
By a dark secret, surer than the grave;
Her mother scared and unexpostulating
From the dread manner of her wish achieved:
And she!—Once more take courage, my faint heart;
What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee?
I have such foresight as assures success:
Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,
When dread events are near, stir up men's minds
To black suggestions; and he prospers best,
Not who becomes the instrument of ill,
But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes
Its empire and its prey of other hearts
Till it become his slave . . . as I will do. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.* LUCRETIA, *to her enter* BEATRICE.

Beatrice. (*She enters staggering, and speaks wildly.*) Reach me that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt;
My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me . . .
I see but indistinctly . . .
Lucretia. My sweet child,
You have no wound; 'tis only a cold dew
That starts from your dear brow . . . Alas! Alas!
What has befallen?
Beatrice. How comes this hair undone?
Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,
And yet I tied it fast.—O, horrible!
The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls
Spin round! I see a woman weeping there,
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I
Slide giddily as the world reels. . . . My God!
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood!
The sunshine on the floor is black! The air
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe
In charnel pits! Pah! I am choked! There creeps
A clinging, black, contaminating mist
About me . . . 'tis substantial, heavy, thick,
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues
My fingers and my limbs to one another,
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!
My God! I never knew what the mad felt
Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt!

(*More wildly.*) No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul
Which would burst forth into the wandering air! (*A pause.*)
What hideous thought was that I had even now?
'Tis gone; and yet its burthen remains here
O'er these dull eyes . . . upon this weary heart!
O, world! O, life! O, day! O, misery!
Lucretia. What ails thee, my poor child? She answers not:
Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,
But not its cause; suffering has dried away
The source from which it sprung . . .
Beatrice (*franticly*). Like Parricide . . .
Misery has killed its father: yet its father
Never like mine . . . O, God! What thing am I?
Lucretia. My dearest child, what has your father done?
Beatrice (*doubtfully*). Who art thou, questioner? I have no father.
(*Aside.*) She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me,
It is a piteous office. [*To* Lucretia, *in a slow, subdued voice.*
Do you know
I thought I was that wretched Beatrice
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales
From hall to hall by the entangled hair;
At others, pens up naked in damp cells
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story
So did I overact in my sick dreams,
That I imagined . . . no, it cannot be!
Horrible things have been in this wide world,
Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange
Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived
Than ever there was found a heart to do.
But never fancy imaged such a deed
As . . . [*Pauses, suddenly recollecting herself.*
Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die
With fearful expectation, that indeed
Thou art not what thou seemest . . . Mother!
Lucretia. Oh!
My sweet child, know you . . .
Beatrice. Yet speak it not:
For then if this be truth, that other too
Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,
Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,
Never to change, never to pass away.
Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;
Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice.
I have talked some wild words, but will no more.
Mother, come near me: from this point of time,
I am . . . [*Her voice dies away faintly.*
Lucretia. Alas! What has befallen thee, child?
What has thy father done?

Beatrice. What have I done?
Am I not innocent? Is it my crime
That one with white hair, and imperious brow,
Who tortured me from my forgotten years,
As parents only dare, should call himself
My father, yet should be!– Oh, what am I?
What name, what place, what memory shall be mine?
What retrospects, outliving even despair?
Lucretia. He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:
We know that death alone can make us free;
His death or ours. But what can he have done
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury?
Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,
Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine
With one another.
Beatrice. 'Tis the restless life
Tortured within them. If I try to speak
I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done;
What, yet I know not . . . something which shall make
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow
In the dread lightning which avenges it;
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying
The consequence of what it cannot cure.
Some such thing is to be endured or done:
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,
And never anything will move me more.
But now!—O blood, which art my father's blood,
Circling through these contaminated veins,
If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,
Could wash away the crime, and punishment
By which I suffer . . . no, that cannot be!
Many might doubt there were a God above
Who sees and permits evil, and so die:
That faith no agony shall obscure in me.
Lucretia. It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;
Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh, my lost child,
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief
Thy sufferings from my fear.
Beatrice. I hide them not.
What are the words which you would have me speak?
I, who can feign no image in my mind
Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought
Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up
In its own formless horror: of all words,
That minister to mortal intercourse,
Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell
My misery: if another ever knew
Aught like to it, she died as I will die,
And left it, as I must, without a name.
Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee

A punishment and a reward . . . Oh, which
Have I deserved?
Lucretia. The peace of innocence;
Till in your season you be called to heaven.
Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done
No evil. Death must be the punishment
Of crime, or the reward of trampling down
The thorns which God has strewed upon the path
Which leads to immortality.
Beatrice. Ay, death . . .
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.
If I must live day after day, and keep
These limbs, the unworthy temple of Thy spirit,
As a foul den from which what Thou abhorrest
May mock Thee, unavenged . . . it shall not be!
Self-murder . . . no, that might be no escape,
For Thy decree yawns like a Hell between
Our will and it:—O! In this mortal world
There is no vindication and no law
Which can adjudge and execute the doom
Of that through which I suffer.

Enter Orsino.

(*She approaches him solemnly.*) Welcome, Friend!
I have to tell you that, since last we met,
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,
That neither life nor death can give me rest.
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.
Orsino. And what is he who has thus injured you?
Beatrice. The man they call my father: a dread name.
Orsino. It cannot be . . .
Beatrice. What it can be, or not,
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been;
Advise me how it shall not be again.
I thought to die; but a religious awe
Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself
Might be no refuge from the consciousness
Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak!
Orsino. Accuse him of the deed, and let the law
Avenge thee.
Beatrice. Oh, ice-hearted counsellor!
If I could find a word that might make known
The crime of my destroyer; and that done,
My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret
Which cankers my heart's core; ay, lay all bare
So that my unpolluted fame should be
With vilest gossips a stale mouthèd story;
A mock, a byword, an astonishment:—

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140 nor *ed. 1821*; or *edd. 1819, 1839* (*1st*).

If this were done, which never shall be done,
Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,
And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,
Baffling belief, and overpowering speech;
Scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapped
In hideous hints . . . Oh, most assured redress!
Orsino. You will endure it then?
Beatrice. Endure?—Orsino,
It seems your counsel is small profit.
[*Turns from him, and speaks half to herself.*
Ay,
All must be suddenly resolved and done.
What is this undistinguishable mist
Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,
Darkening each other?
Orsino. Should the offender live?
Triumph in his misdeed? and make, by use,
His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,
Thine element; until thou mayst become
Utterly lost; subdued even to the hue
Of that which thou permittest?
Beatrice (*to herself*). Mighty death!
Thou double-visaged shadow? Only judge!
Rightfullest arbiter! [*She retires absorbed in thought.*
Lucretia. If the lightning
Of God has e'er descended to avenge . . .
Orsino. Blaspheme not! His high Providence commits
Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs
Into the hands of men; if they neglect
To punish crime . . .
Lucretia. But if one, like this wretch,
Should mock, with gold, opinion, law, and power?
If there be no appeal to that which makes
The guiltiest tremble? If because our wrongs,
For that they are unnatural, strange, and monstrous,
Exceed all measure of belief? O God!
If, for the very reasons which should make
Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs?
And we, the victims, bear worse punishment
Than that appointed for their torturer?
Orsino. Think not
But that there is redress where there is wrong,
So we be bold enough to seize it.
Lucretia. How?
If there were any way to make all sure,
I know not . . . but I think it might be good
To . . .
Orsino. Why, his late outrage to Beatrice;
For it is such, as I but faintly guess,
As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her
Only one duty, how she may avenge:

You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;
Me, but one counsel . . .
Lucretia. For we cannot hope
That aid, or retribution, or resource
Will arise thence, where every other one
Might find them with less need. [Beatrice *advances.*
Orsino. Then . . .
Beatrice. Peace, Orsino!
And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray,
That you put off, as garments overworn,
Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,
And all the fit restraints of daily life,
Which have been borne from childhood, but which now
Would be a mockery to my holier plea.
As I have said, I have endured a wrong,
Which, though it be expressionless, is such
As asks atonement; both for what is past,
And lest I be reserved, day after day,
To load with crimes an overburthened soul,
And be . . . what ye can dream not. I have prayed
To God, and I have talked with my own heart,
And have unravelled my entangled will,
And have at length determined what is right.
Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?
Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.
Orsino. I swear
To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,
My silence, and whatever else is mine,
To thy commands.
Lucretia. You think we should devise
His death?
Beatrice. And execute what is devised,
And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.
Orsino. And yet most cautious.
Lucretia. For the jealous laws
Would punish us with death and infamy
For that which it became themselves to do.
Beatrice. Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,
What are the means?
Orsino. I know two dull, fierce outlaws,
Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell
What we now want.
Lucretia. To-morrow before dawn,
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,
Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines.
If he arrive there . . .
Beatrice. He must not arrive.
Orsino. Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

Lucretia. The sun will scarce be set.
Beatrice. But I remember
Two miles on this side of the fort, the road
Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,
And winds with short turns down the precipice;
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,
Which has, from unimaginable years,
Sustained itself with terror and with toil
Over a gulf, and with the agony
With which it clings seems slowly coming down;
Even as a wretched soul hour after hour,
Clings to the mass of life; yet clinging, leans;
And leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss
In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,
The melancholy mountain yawns . . . below,
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge
Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow,
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,
Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair
Is matted in one solid roof of shade
By the dark ivy's twine. At noonday here
'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night.
Orsino. Before you reach that bridge make some excuse
For spurring on your mules, or loitering
Until . . .
Beatrice. What sound is that?
Lucretia. Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly
Returned . . . Make some excuse for being here.
Beatrice. (*To* ORSINO, *as she goes out.*) That step we hear approach must never pass
The bridge of which we spoke.
[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE.
Orsino. What shall I do?
Cenci must find me here, and I must bear
The imperious inquisition of his looks
As to what brought me hither: let me mask
Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

Enter GIACOMO, *in a hurried manner.*

How! Have you ventured hither? Know you then
That Cenci is from home?
Giacomo. I sought him here;
And now must wait till he returns.
Orsino. Great God!
Weigh you the danger of this rashness?
Giacomo. Ay!
Does my destroyer know his danger? We

278 hither *ed. 1821*; thither *ed. 1819.*

Are now no more, as once, parent and child,
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed;
The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe:
He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,
And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;
And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat
Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold;
I ask not happy years; nor memories
Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love;
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;
But only my fair fame; only one hoard
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,
Under the penury heaped on me by thee,
Or I will . . . God can understand and pardon,
Why should I speak with man?
Orsino. Be calm, dear friend.
Giacomo. Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.
This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,
Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me,
And then denied the loan; and left me so
In poverty, the which I sought to mend
By holding a poor office in the state.
It had been promised to me, and already
I bought new clothing for my raggèd babes,
And my wife smiled; and my heart knew repose.
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,
Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus
He paid for vilest service. I returned
With this ill news, and we sate sad together
Solacing our despondency with tears
Of such affection and unbroken faith
As temper life's worst bitterness; when he,
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,
Mocking our poverty, and telling us
Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.
And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,
I spoke of my wife's dowry; but he coined
A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted
The sum in secret riot; and he saw
My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.
And when I knew the impression he had made,
And felt my wife insult with silent scorn
My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,
I went forth too: but soon returned again;
Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught
My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,
'Give us clothes, father! Give us better food!
What you in one night squander were enough
For months!' I looked, and saw that home was hell.
And to that hell will I return no more
Until mine enemy has rendered up

Atonement, or, as he gave life to me
I will, reversing Nature's law . . .
Orsino. Trust me,
The compensation which thou seekest here
Will be denied.
Giacomo. Then . . . Are you not my friend?
Did you not hint at the alternative,
Upon the brink of which you see I stand,
The other day when we conversed together?
My wrongs were then less. That word parricide,
Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.
Orsino. It must be fear itself, for the bare word
Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God
Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,
So sanctifying it: what you devise
Is, as it were, accomplished.
Giacomo. Is he dead?
Orsino. His grave is ready. Know that since we met
Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.
Giacomo. What outrage?
Orsino. That she speaks not, but you may
Conceive such half conjectures as I do,
From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief
Of her stern brow bent on the idle air,
And her severe unmodulated voice,
Drowning both tenderness and dread; and last
From this; that whilst her step-mother and I,
Bewildered in our horror, talked together
With obscure hints; both self-misunderstood
And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,
Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,
She interrupted us, and with a look
Which told before she spoke it, he must die: . . .
Giacomo. It is enough. My doubts are well appeased;
There is a higher reason for the act
Than mine; there is a holier judge than me,
A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice,
Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth
Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised
A living flower, but thou hast pitied it
With needless tears! Fair sister, thou in whom
Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom
Did not destroy each other! Is there made
Ravage of thee? O, heart, I ask no more
Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,
Till he return, and stab him at the door?
Orsino. Not so; some accident might interpose
To rescue him from what is now most sure;
And you are unprovided where to fly,
How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:
All is contrived; success is so assured
That . . .

Enter BEATRICE.

Beatrice. 'Tis my brother's voice! You know me not?
Giacomo. My sister, my lost sister!
Beatrice. Lost indeed!
I see Orsino has talked with you, and
That you conjecture things too horrible
To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,
He might return: yet kiss me; I shall know
That then thou hast consented to his death.
Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,
Brotherly love, justice and clemency,
And all things that make tender hardest hearts
Make thine hard, brother. Answer not . . . farewell.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A mean Apartment in* GIACOMO'S *House.*
GIACOMO *alone.*

Giacomo. 'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.
[*Thunder, and the sound of a storm.*
What! can the everlasting elements
Feel with a worm like man? If so, the shaft
Of mercy-wingèd lightning would not fall
On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep:
They are now living in unmeaning dreams:
But I must wake, still doubting if that deed
Be just which is most necessary. O,
Thou unreplenished lamp! whose narrow fire
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,
Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,
Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be
As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks
Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:
But that no power can fill with vital oil
That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood
Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold:
It is the form that moulded mine that sinks
Into the white and yellow spasms of death:
It is the soul by which mine was arrayed
In God's immortal likeness which now stands
Naked before Heaven's judgement seat! [*A bell strikes.*
One! Two!
The hours crawl on; and when my hairs are white,
My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,
Tortured between just hate and vain remorse;
Chiding the tardy messenger of news
Like those which I expect. I almost wish
He be not dead, although my wrongs are great;
Yet . . . 'tis Orsino's step . . .

Enter ORSINO.

Speak!
Orsino. I am come
To say he has escaped.
Giacomo. Escaped!
Orsino. And safe
Within Petrella. He passed by the spot
Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.
Giacomo. Are we the fools of such contingencies?
And do we waste in blind misgivings thus
The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,
Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter
With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth
Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done
But my repentance.
Orsino. See, the lamp is out.
Giacomo. If no remorse is ours when the dim air
Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail
When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits
See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?
No, I am hardened.
Orsino. Why, what need of this?
Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse
In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.
But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.
Giacomo (*lighting the lamp*). And yet once quenched I cannot thus relume
My father's life: do you not think his ghost
Might plead that argument with God?
Orsino. Once gone
You cannot now recall your sister's peace;
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope;
Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;
Nor your dead mother; nor . . .
Giacomo. O, speak no more!
I am resolved, although this very hand
Must quench the life that animated it.
Orsino. There is no need of that. Listen: you know
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella
In old Colonna's time; him whom your father
Degraded from his post? And Marzio,
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due?
Giacomo. I knew Olimpio; and they say he hated
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage
His lips grew white only to see him pass.
Of Marzio I know nothing.
Orsino. Marzio's hate
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,

But in your name, and as at your request,
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.
Giacomo. Only to talk?
Orsino. The moments which even now
Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour
May memorize their flight with death: ere then
They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,
And made an end . . .
Giacomo. Listen! What sound is that?
Orsino. The house-dog moans, and the beams crack: nought else.
Giacomo. It is my wife complaining in her sleep:
I doubt not she is saying bitter things
Of me; and all my children round her dreaming
That I deny them sustenance.
Orsino. Whilst he
Who truly took it from them, and who fills
Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps
Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly
Mocks thee in visions of successful hate
Too like the truth of day.
Giacomo. If e'er he wakes
Again, I will not trust to hireling hands . . .
Orsino. Why, that were well. I must be gone; good-night.
When next we meet—may all be done!
Giacomo. And all
Forgotten: Oh, that I had never been! [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle of Petrella.*
Enter CENCI.

Cenci. She comes not; yet I left her even now
Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty
Of her delay: yet what if threats are vain?
Am I not now within Petrella's moat?
Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome?
Might I not drag her by the golden hair?
Stamp on her? Keep her sleepless till her brain
Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?
Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone
What I most seek! No, 'tis her stubborn will
Which by its own consent shall stoop as low
As that which drags it down.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Thou loathèd wretch!
Hide thee from my abhorrence: fly, begone!

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91 may all be done! GIACOMO: And all *ed. 1821*; GIACOMO: May all be done, and all *ed. 1819*. 4 not now *ed. 1821*; now not *ed. 1819*.

Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.
Lucretia. Oh,
Husband! I pray for thine own wretched sake
Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee
Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,
Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.
And thou art old; thy hairs are hoary gray;
As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,
Pity thy daughter; give her to some friend
In marriage: so that she may tempt thee not
To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.
Cenci. What! like her sister who has found a home
To mock my hate from with prosperity?
Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee
And all that yet remain. My death may be
Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,
Bid her come hither, and before my mood
Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.
Lucretia. She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence
She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance;
And in that trance she heard a voice which said,
'Cenci must die! Let him confess himself!
Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear
If God, to punish his enormous crimes,
Harden his dying heart!'
Cenci. Why—such things are . . .
No doubt divine revealings may be made.
'Tis plain I have been favoured from above,
For when I cursed my sons they died.—Ay . . . so . . .
As to the right or wrong, that 's talk . . . repentance . . .
Repentance is an easy moment's work
And more depends on God than me. Well . . . well . . .
I must give up the greater point, which was
To poison and corrupt her soul.
[*A pause;* LUCRETIA *approaches anxiously, and then shrinks back as he speaks.*
One, two;
Ay . . . Rocco and Cristofano my curse
Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find
Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave:
Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,
Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo,
He is so innocent, I will bequeath
The memory of these deeds, and make his youth
The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts
Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.
When all is done, out in the wide Campagna,
I will pile up my silver and my gold;
My costly robes, paintings and tapestries;
My parchments and all records of my wealth,
And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave

Of my possessions nothing but my name:
Which shall be an inheritance to strip
Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,
My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign
Into the hands of him who wielded it;
Be it for its own punishment or theirs,
He will not ask it of me till the lash
Be broken in its last and deepest wound;
Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,
Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make
Short work and sure . . . [*Going.*
Lucretia. (*Stops him.*) Oh, stay! It was a feint:
She had no vision, and she heard no voice.
I said it but to awe thee.
Cenci. That is well.
Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,
Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!
For Beatrice worse terrors are in store
To bend her to my will.
Lucretia. Oh! to what will?
What cruel sufferings more than she has known
Canst thou inflict?
Cenci. Andrea! Go call my daughter,
And if she comes not tell her that I come.
What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step,
Through infamies unheard of among men:
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon
Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,
One among which shall be . . . What? Canst thou guess?
She shall become (for what she most abhors
Shall have a fascination to entrap
Her loathing will) to her own conscious self
All she appears to others; and when dead,
As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,
A rebel to her father and her God,
Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;
Her name shall be the terror of the earth;
Her spirit shall approach the throne of God
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

Enter ANDREA.

Andrea. The Lady Beatrice . . .
Cenci. Speak, pale slave! What
Said she?
Andrea. My Lord, 'twas what she looked; she said:
'Go tell my father that I see the gulf
Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,
I will not.' [*Exit* ANDREA.
Cenci. Go thou quick, Lucretia,
Tell her to come; yet let her understand

Her coming is consent: and say, moreover,
That if she come not I will curse her. [*Exit* LUCRETIA.
Ha!
With what but with a father's curse doth God
Panic-strike armèd victory, and make pale
Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father
Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,
Be he who asks even what men call me.
Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers
Awe her before I speak? For I on them
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Well; what? Speak, wretch!
Lucretia. She said, 'I cannot come;
Go tell my father that I see a torrent
Of his own blood raging between us.'
Cenci (*kneeling*). God!
Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,
Which Thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,
This particle of my divided being;
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,
Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant
To aught good use; if her bright loveliness
Was kindled to illumine this dark world;
If nursed by Thy selectest dew of love
Such virtues blossom in her as should make
The peace of life, I pray Thee for my sake,
As Thou the common God and Father art
Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!
Earth, in the name of God, let her food be
Poison, until she be encrusted round
With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head
The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,
Till she be speckled like a toad; parch up
Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs
To loathèd lameness! All-beholding sun,
Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes
With thine own blinding beams!
Lucretia. Peace! Peace!
For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.
When high God grants He punishes such prayers.
Cenci (*leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards Heaven*).
He does His will, I mine! This in addition,
That if she have a child . . .
Lucretia. Horrible thought!
Cenci. That if she ever have a child; and thou,
Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,
That thou be fruitful in her, and increase
And multiply, fulfilling his command,

And my deep imprecation! May it be
A hideous likeness of herself, that as
From a distorting mirror, she may see
Her image mixed with what she most abhors,
Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.
And that the child may from its infancy
Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,
Turning her mother's love to misery:
And that both she and it may live until
It shall repay her care and pain with hate,
Or what may else be more unnatural.
So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs
Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.
Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,
Before my words are chronicled in Heaven.
[*Exit* LUCRETIA.
I do not feel as if I were a man,
But like a fiend appointed to chastise
The offences of some unremembered world.
My blood is running up and down my veins;
A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle:
I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe;
My heart is beating with an expectation
Of horrid joy.

Enter LUCRETIA.

What? Speak!
Lucretia. She bids thee curse;
And if thy curses, as they cannot do,
Could kill her soul . . .
Cenci. She would not come. 'Tis well,
I can do both: first take what I demand,
And then extort concession. To thy chamber!
Fly ere I spurn thee: and beware this night
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer
To come between the tiger and his prey. [*Exit* LUCRETIA.
It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim
With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.
Conscience! Oh, thou most insolent of lies!
They say that sleep, that healing dew of Heaven,
Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain
Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go
First to belie thee with an hour of rest,
Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then . . .
O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake
Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!
There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven
As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth
All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things
Shall with a spirit of unnatural life
Stir and be quickened . . . even as I am now. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Before the Castle of Petrella. Enter* BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA *above on the Ramparts.*

Beatrice. They come not yet.
Lucretia. 'Tis scarce midnight.
Beatrice. How slow
Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,
Lags leaden-footed time!
Lucretia. The minutes pass . . .
If he should wake before the deed is done?
Beatrice. O, mother! He must never wake again.
What thou hast said persuades me that our act
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell
Out of a human form.
Lucretia. 'Tis true he spoke
Of death and judgement with strange confidence
For one so wicked; as a man believing
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.
And yet to die without confession! . . .
Beatrice. Oh!
Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,
And will not add our dread necessity
To the amount of his offences.

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO, *below.*

Lucretia. See,
They come.
Beatrice. All mortal things must hasten thus
To their dark end. Let us go down.
[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE *from above.*
Olimpio. How feel you to this work?
Marzio. As one who thinks
A thousand crowns excellent market price
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.
Olimpio. It is the white reflection of your own,
Which you call pale.
Marzio. Is that their natural hue?
Olimpio. Or 'tis my hate and the deferred desire
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.
Marzio. You are inclined then to this business?
Olimpio. Ay.
If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,
I could not be more willing.

Enter BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA, *below.*

Noble ladies!
Beatrice. Are ye resolved?
Olimpio. Is he asleep?
Marzio. Is all
Quiet?
Lucretia. I mixed an opiate with his drink:

He sleeps so soundly . . .
Beatrice. That his death will be
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,
A dark continuance of the Hell within him,
Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?
Ye know it is a high and holy deed?
Olimpio. We are resolved.
Marzio. As to the how this act
Be warranted, it rests with you.
Beatrice. Well, follow!
Olimpio. Hush! Hark! What noise is that?
Marzio. Ha! some one comes!
Beatrice. Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!
And be your steps like mine, light, quick and bold. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the Castle. Enter* BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA.

Lucretia. They are about it now.
Beatrice. Nay, it is done.
Lucretia. I have not heard him groan.
Beatrice. He will not groan.
Lucretia. What sound is that?
Beatrice. List! 'tis the tread of feet
About his bed.
Lucretia. My God!
If he be now a cold stiff corpse . . .
Beatrice. O, fear not
What may be done, but what is left undone:
The act seals all.

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

Is it accomplished?
Marzio. What?
Olimpio. Did you not call?
Beatrice. When?
Olimpio. Now.
Beatrice. I ask if all is over?
Olimpio. We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;
His thin gray hair, his stern and reverend brow,
His veinèd hands crossed on his heaving breast,
And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,
Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.
Marzio. But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave
And leave me the reward. And now my knife
Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man

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10 reverend] reverent *all editions.*

Stirred in his sleep, and said, 'God! hear, O, hear,
A father's curse! What, art Thou not our Father?'
And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost
Of my dead father speaking through his lips,
And could not kill him.
Beatrice. Miserable slaves!
Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,
Found ye the boldness to return to me
With such a deed undone? Base palterers!
Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience
Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge
Is an equivocation: it sleeps over
A thousand daily acts disgracing men;
And when a deed where mercy insults Heaven . . .
Why do I talk?
[*Snatching a dagger from one of them and raising it.*
Hadst thou a tongue to say,
'She murdered her own father!'—I must do it!
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!
Olimpio. Stop, for God's sake!
Marzio. I will go back and kill him.
Olimpio. Give me the weapon, we must do thy will.
Beatrice. Take it! Depart! Return!
[*Exeunt* OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.
How pale thou art!
We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime
To leave undone.
Lucretia. Would it were done!
Beatrice. Even whilst
That doubt is passing through your mind, the world
Is conscious of a change. Darkness and Hell
Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath
Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied blood
Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

He is . . .
Olimpio. Dead!
Marzio. We strangled him that there might be no blood;
And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden
Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.
Beatrice (*giving them a bag of coin*). Here, take this gold, and hasten to your homes.
And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed
By that which made me tremble, wear thou this!
[*Clothes him in a rich mantle.*
It was the mantle which my grandfather
Wore in his high prosperity, and men
Envied his state: so may they envy thine.
Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God

To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark,
If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.
[*A horn is sounded.*

Lucretia. Hark, 'tis the castle horn; my God! it sounds
Like the last trump.

Beatrice. Some tedious guest is coming.

Lucretia. The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp
Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves!
[*Exeunt* Olimpio *and* Marzio.

Beatrice. Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:
The spirit which doth reign within these limbs
Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep
Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV.—*Another Apartment in the Castle. Enter on one side the* Legate Savella, *introduced by a Servant, and on the other* Lucretia *and* Bernardo.

Savella. Lady, my duty to his Holiness
Be my excuse that thus unseasonably
I break upon your rest. I must speak with
Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

Lucretia (*in a hurried and confused manner*). I think he sleeps;
Yet wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile,
He is a wicked and a wrathful man;
Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,
Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,
It were not well; indeed it were not well.
Wait till day break . . . (*aside*) O, I am deadly sick!

Savella. I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count
Must answer charges of the gravest import,
And suddenly; such my commission is.

Lucretia (*with increased agitation*). I dare not rouse him: I know none who dare . . .
'Twere perilous; . . . you might as safely waken
A serpent; or a corpse in which some fiend
Were laid to sleep.

Savella. Lady, my moments here
Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,
Since none else dare.

Lucretia (*aside*). O, terror! O, despair!
(*To* Bernardo.) Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to
Your father's chamber. [*Exeunt* Savella *and* Bernardo.

Enter Beatrice.

Beatrice. 'Tis a messenger
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands
Before the throne of unappealable God.

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6 a wrathful *ed. 1821*; wrathful *edd. 1819, 1839*.

Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,
Acquit our deed.
Lucretia. Oh, agony of fear!
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard
The Legate's followers whisper as they passed
They had a warrant for his instant death.
All was prepared by unforbidden means
Which we must pay so dearly, having done.
Even now they search the tower, and find the body;
Now they suspect the truth; now they consult
Before they come to tax us with the fact;
O, horrible, 'tis all discovered!
Beatrice. Mother,
What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold
As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child
To fear that others know what thou hast done,
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus
Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks
All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,
And fear no other witness but thy fear.
For if, as cannot be, some circumstance
Should rise in accusation, we can blind
Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,
Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,
As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,
And what may follow now regards not me.
I am as universal as the light;
Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm
As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock
But shakes it not. [*A cry within and tumult.*
Voices. Murder! Murder! Murder!

Enter BERNARDO *and* SAVELLA.

Savella (*to his followers*). Go search the castle round; sound the alarm;
Look to the gates that none escape!
Beatrice. What now?
Bernardo. I know not what to say . . . my father's dead.
Beatrice. How; dead! he only sleeps; you mistake, brother.
His sleep is very calm, very like death;
'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.
He is not dead?
Bernardo. Dead; murdered.
Lucretia (*with extreme agitation*). Oh no, no,
He is not murdered though he may be dead;
I have alone the keys of those apartments.
Savella. Ha! Is it so?
Beatrice. My Lord, I pray excuse us;
We will retire; my mother is not well:

She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.
[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE.
Savella. Can you suspect who may have murdered him?
Bernardo. I know not what to think.
Savella. Can you name any
Who had an interest in his death?
Bernardo. Alas!
I can name none who had not, and those most
Who most lament that such a deed is done;
My mother, and my sister, and myself.
Savella. 'Tis strange! There were clear marks of violence.
I found the old man's body in the moonlight
Hanging beneath the window of his chamber,
Among the branches of a pine: he could not
Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped
And effortless; 'tis true there was no blood . . .
Favour me, Sir; it much imports your house
That all should be made clear; to tell the ladies
That I request their presence. [*Exit* BERNARDO.

Enter GUARDS *bringing in* MARZIO.

Guard. We have one.
Officer. My Lord, we found this ruffian and another
Lurking among the rocks; there is no doubt
But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci:
Each had a bag of coin; this fellow wore
A gold-inwoven robe, which shining bright
Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon
Betrayed them to our notice: the other fell
Desperately fighting.
Savella. What does he confess?
Officer. He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him
May speak.
Savella. Their language is at least sincere. [*Reads.*

'*To the Lady Beatrice.*
'*That the atonement of what my nature sickens to conjecture may soon arrive, I send thee, at thy brother's desire, those who will speak and do more than I dare write. . . .*
'*Thy devoted servant, Orsino.*'

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* BERNARDO.

Knowest thou this writing, Lady?
Beatrice. No.
Savella. Nor thou?
Lucretia. (*Her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation.*) Where was it found? What is it? It should be
Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror
Which never yet found utterance, but which made
Between that hapless child and her dead father
A gulf of obscure hatred.

Savella. Is it so?
Is it true, Lady, that thy father did
Such outrages as to awaken in thee
Unfilial hate?
Beatrice. Not hate, 'twas more than hate:
This is most true, yet wherefore question me?
Savella. There is a deed demanding question done;
Thou hast a secret which will answer not.
Beatrice. What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.
Savella. I do arrest all present in the name
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.
Lucretia. O, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty.
Beatrice. Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,
I am more innocent of parricide
Than is a child born fatherless . . . Dear mother,
Your gentleness and patience are no shield
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,
Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,
Rather will ye who are their ministers,
Bar all access to retribution first,
And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do
What ye neglect, arming familiar things
To the redress of an unwonted crime,
Make ye the victims who demanded it
Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,
If it be true he murdered Cenci, was
A sword in the right hand of justest God.
Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name
God therefore scruples to avenge.
Savella. You own
That you desired his death?
Beatrice. It would have been
A crime no less than his, if for one moment
That fierce desire had faded in my heart.
'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,
Ay, I even knew . . . for God is wise and just,
That some strange sudden death hung over him.
'Tis true that this did happen, and most true
There was no other rest for me on earth,
No other hope in Heaven . . . now what of this?
Savella. Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are both:
I judge thee not.
Beatrice. And yet, if you arrest me,
You are the judge and executioner
Of that which is the life of life: the breath
Of accusation kills an innocent name,
And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life

Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false
That I am guilty of foul parricide;
Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,
That other hands have sent my father's soul
To ask the mercy he denied to me.
Now leave us free; stain not a noble house
With vague surmises of rejected crime;
Add to our sufferings and your own neglect
No heavier sum: let them have been enough:
Leave us the wreck we have.
Savella. I dare not, Lady.
I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:
There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.
Lucretia. O, not to Rome! O, take us not to Rome!
Beatrice. Why not to Rome, dear mother? There as here
Our innocence is as an armèd heel
To trample accusation. God is there
As here, and with His shadow ever clothes
The innocent, the injured and the weak;
And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady, lean
On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,
As soon as you have taken some refreshment,
And had all such examinations made
Upon the spot, as may be necessary
To the full understanding of this matter,
We shall be ready. Mother; will you come?
Lucretia. Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest
Self-accusation from our agony!
Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio?
All present; all confronted; all demanding
Each from the other's countenance the thing
Which is in every heart! O, misery!
[*She faints, and is borne out.*
Savella. She faints: an ill appearance this.
Beatrice. My Lord,
She knows not yet the uses of the world.
She fears that power is as a beast which grasps
And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes
All things to guilt which is its nutriment.
She cannot know how well the supine slaves
Of blind authority read the truth of things
When written on a brow of guilelessness:
She sees not yet triumphant Innocence
Stand at the judgement-seat of mortal man,
A judge and an accuser of the wrong
Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord;
Our suite will join yours in the court below. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in* ORSINO'S *Palace. Enter* ORSINO *and* GIACOMO.

Giacomo. Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?
O, that the vain remorse which must chastise
Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn
As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!
O, that the hour when present had cast off
The mantle of its mystery, and shown
The ghastly form with which it now returns
When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds
Of conscience to their prey! Alas! Alas!
It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,
To kill an old and hoary-headed father.
Orsino. It has turned out unluckily, in truth.
Giacomo. To violate the sacred doors of sleep;
To cheat kind Nature of the placid death
Which she prepares for overwearied age;
To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul
Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers
A life of burning crimes . . .
Orsino. You cannot say
I urged you to the deed.
Giacomo. O, had I never
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance
The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou
Never with hints and questions made me look
Upon the monster of my thought, until
It grew familiar to desire . . .
Orsino. 'Tis thus
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts
Upon the abettors of their own resolve;
Or anything but their weak, guilty selves.
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness
Of penitence; confess 'tis fear disguised
From its own shame that takes the mantle now
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?
Giacomo. How can that be? Already Beatrice,
Lucretia and the murderer are in prison.
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,
Sent to arrest us.
Orsino. I have all prepared
For instant flight. We can escape even now,
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.
Giacomo. Rather expire in tortures, as I may.
What! will you cast by self-accusing flight
Assured conviction upon Beatrice?
She, who alone in this unnatural work,
Stands like God's angel ministered upon

By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong
As turns black parricide to piety;
Whilst we for basest ends . . . I fear, Orsino,
While I consider all your words and looks,
Comparing them with your proposal now,
That you must be a villain. For what end
Could you engage in such a perilous crime,
Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,
Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar? No,
Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!
Coward and slave! But, no, defend thyself; [*Drawing.*
Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue
Disdains to brand thee with.
Orsino. Put up your weapon.
Is it the desperation of your fear
Makes you thus rash and sudden with a friend,
Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger
Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed
Was but to try you. As for me, I think,
Thankless affection led me to this point,
From which, if my firm temper could repent,
I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak
The ministers of justice wait below:
They grant me these brief moments. Now if you
Have any word of melancholy comfort
To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass
Out at the postern, and avoid them so.
Giacomo. O, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me?
Would that my life could purchase thine!
Orsino. That wish
Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well!
Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor? [*Exit* GIACOMO.
I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting
At his own gate, and such was my contrivance
That I might rid me both of him and them.
I thought to act a solemn comedy
Upon the painted scene of this new world,
And to attain my own peculiar ends
By some such plot of mingled good and ill
As others weave; but there arose a Power
Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device
And turned it to a net of ruin . . . Ha! [*A shout is heard.*
Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad?
But I will pass, wrapped in a vile disguise;
Rags on my back, and a false innocence
Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd
Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then
For a new name and for a country new,
And a new life, fashioned on old desires,
To change the honours of abandoned Rome.

58 a friend *ed. 1821*; your friend *ed. 1839*.

And these must be the masks of that within,
Which must remain unaltered . . . Oh, I fear
That what is past will never let me rest!
Why, when none else is conscious, but myself,
Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt
Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly
My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave
Of . . . what? A word? which those of this false world
Employ against each other, not themselves;
As men wear daggers not for self-offence.
But if I am mistaken, where shall I
Find the disguise to hide me from myself,
As now I skulk from every other eye? [*Exit.*

Scene II.—*A Hall of Justice.* Camillo, Judges, *&c., are discovered seated;* Marzio *is led in.*

First Judge. Accused, do you persist in your denial?
I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?
I demand who were the participators
In your offence? Speak truth and the whole truth.
Marzio. My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing;
Olimpio sold the robe to me from which
You would infer my guilt.
Second Judge. Away with him!
First Judge. Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss
Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,
That you would bandy lover's talk with it
Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!
Marzio. Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.
First Judge. Then speak.
Marzio. I strangled him in his sleep.
First Judge. Who urged you to it?
Marzio. His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate
Orsino sent me to Petrella; there
The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia
Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I
And my companion forthwith murdered him.
Now let me die.
First Judge. This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,
Lead forth the prisoner!

Enter Lucretia, Beatrice, *and* Giacomo, *guarded.*

Look upon this man;
When did you see him last?
Beatrice. We never saw him.
Marzio. You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.
Beatrice. I know thee! How? where? when?
Marzio. You know 'twas I
Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes
To kill your father. When the thing was done
You clothed me in a robe of woven gold

And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.
You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,
You know that what I speak is true.
[BEATRICE *advances towards him; he covers his face, and shrinks back.*
Oh, dart
The terrible resentment of those eyes
On the dead earth! Turn them away from me!
They wound: 'twas torture forced the truth. My Lords,
Having said this let me be led to death.
Beatrice. Poor wretch, I pity thee: yet stay awhile.
Camillo. Guards, lead him not away.
Beatrice. Cardinal Camillo,
You have a good repute for gentleness
And wisdom: can it be that you sit here
To countenance a wicked farce like this?
When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged
From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart
And bade to answer, not as he believes,
But as those may suspect or do desire
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply:
And that in peril of such hideous torments
As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now
The thing you surely know, which is that you,
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,
And you were told: 'Confess that you did poison
Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child
Who was the lodestar of your life:'—and though
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or done therein
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,
Yet you would say, 'I confess anything:'
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,
The refuge of dishonourable death.
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert
My innocence.
Camillo (*much moved*). What shall we think, my Lords?
Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen
Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul
That she is guiltless.
Judge. Yet she must be tortured.
Camillo. I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew
(If he now lived he would be just her age;
His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes
Like hers in shape, but blue and not so deep)
As that most perfect image of God's love
That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.
She is as pure as speechless infancy!
Judge. Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord,
If you forbid the rack. His Holiness

Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime
By the severest forms of law; nay even
To stretch a point against the criminals.
The prisoners stand accused of parricide
Upon such evidence as justifies
Torture.
Beatrice. What evidence? This man's?
Judge. Even so.
Beatrice (*to* MARZIO). Come near. And who art thou thus chosen forth
Out of the multitude of living men
To kill the innocent?
Marzio. I am Marzio,
Thy father's vassal.
Beatrice. Fix thine eyes on mine;
Answer to what I ask. [*Turning to the* JUDGES.
I prithee mark
His countenance: unlike bold calumny
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends
His gaze on the blind earth.
(*To* MARZIO.) What! wilt thou say
That I did murder my own father?
Marzio. Oh!
Spare me! My brain swims round . . . I cannot speak . . .
It was that horrid torture forced the truth.
Take me away! Let her not look on me!
I am a guilty miserable wretch;
I have said all I know; now, let me die!
Beatrice. My Lords, if by my nature I had been
So stern, as to have planned the crime alleged,
Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,
And the rack makes him utter, do you think
I should have left this two-edged instrument
Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife
With my own name engraven on the heft,
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,
For my own death? That with such horrible need
For deepest silence, I should have neglected
So trivial a precaution, as the making
His tomb the keeper of a secret written
On a thief's memory? What is his poor life?
What are a thousand lives? A parricide
Had trampled them like dust; and, see, he lives!
(*Turning to* MARZIO.) And thou . . .
Marzio. Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more!
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,
Wound worse than torture.
(*To the* JUDGES.) I have told it all;
For pity's sake lead me away to death.
Camillo. Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice,

He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf
From the keen breath of the serenest north.
Beatrice. O thou who tremblest on the giddy verge
Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me;
So mayst thou answer God with less dismay:
What evil have we done thee? I, alas!
Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,
And so my lot was ordered, that a father
First turned the moments of awakening life
To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope; and then
Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul;
And my untainted fame; and even that peace
Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart;
But the wound was not mortal; so my hate
Became the only worship I could lift
To our great father, who in pity and love,
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off;
And thus his wrong becomes my accusation;
And art thou the accuser? If thou hopest
Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth:
Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.
If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path
Over the trampled laws of God and man,
Rush not before thy Judge, and say: 'My maker,
I have done this and more; for there was one
Who was most pure and innocent on earth;
And because she endured what never any
Guilty or innocent endured before:
Because her wrongs could not be told, not thought;
Because thy hand at length did rescue her;
I with my words killed her and all her kin.'
Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay
The reverence living in the minds of men
Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame!
Think what it is to strangle infant pity,
Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,
Till it become a crime to suffer. Think
What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood
All that which shows like innocence, and is,
Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent,
So that the world lose all discrimination
Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,
And that which now compels thee to reply
To what I ask: Am I, or am I not
A parricide?
Marzio. Thou art not!
Judge. What is this?
Marzio. I here declare those whom I did accuse
Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.
Judge. Drag him away to torments; let them be
Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds

Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not
Till he confess.
Marzio. Torture me as ye will:
A keener pang has wrung a higher truth
From my last breath. She is most innocent!
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me;
I will not give you that fine piece of nature
To rend and ruin. [*Exit* MARZIO, *guarded.*
Camillo. What say ye now, my Lords?
Judge. Let tortures strain the truth till it be white
As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind.
Camillo. Yet stained with blood.
Judge (*to* BEATRICE). Know you this paper, Lady?
Beatrice. Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,
Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name;
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.
What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,
And therefore on the chance that it may be
Some evil, will ye kill us?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Marzio's dead.
Judge. What did he say?
Officer. Nothing. As soon as we
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,
As one who baffles a deep adversary;
And holding his breath, died.
Judge. There remains nothing
But to apply the question to those prisoners,
Who yet remain stubborn.
Camillo. I overrule
Further proceedings, and in the behalf
Of these most innocent and noble persons
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.
Judge. Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells;
And be the engines ready: for this night
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,
Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Cell of a Prison.* BEATRICE *is discovered asleep on a couch. Enter* BERNARDO.

Bernardo. How gently slumber rests upon her face,
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.
After such torments as she bore last night,

164 pang *ed. 1821*; pain *edd. 1819, 1839.*

How light and soft her breathing comes. Ay me!
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.
But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest
From this sweet folded flower, thus . . . wake! awake!
What, sister, canst thou sleep?
Beatrice (*awaking*). I was just dreaming
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise
After our father's presence.
Bernardo. Dear, dear sister,
Would that thy dream were not a dream! O God!
How shall I tell?
Beatrice. What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?
Bernardo. Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst
I stand considering what I have to say
My heart will break.
Beatrice. See now, thou mak'st me weep:
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.
Bernardo. They have confessed; they could endure no more
The tortures . . .
Beatrice. Ha! What was there to confess?
They must have told some weak and wicked lie
To flatter their tormentors. Have they said
That they were guilty? O white innocence,
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide
Thine awful and serenest countenance
From those who know thee not!

Enter JUDGE *with* LUCRETIA *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*

Ignoble hearts!
For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,
Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust?
And that eternal honour which should live
Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,
Changed to a mockery and a byword? What!
Will you give up these bodies to be dragged
At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep
The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,
Who, that they may make our calamity
Their worship and their spectacle, will leave
The churches and the theatres as void
As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude
Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,
Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,
Upon us as we pass to pass away,
And leave . . . what memory of our having been?
Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou,
Who wert a mother to the parentless,
Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,

And let us each be silent as a corpse;
It soon will be as soft as any grave.
'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear
Makes the rack cruel.
Giacomo. They will tear the truth
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:
For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.
Lucretia. Oh, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die;
And after death, God is our judge, not they;
He will have mercy on us.
Bernardo. If indeed
It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;
And then the Pope will surely pardon you,
And all be well.
Judge. Confess, or I will warp
Your limbs with such keen tortures . . .
Beatrice. Tortures! Turn
The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel!
Torture your dog, that he may tell when last
He lapped the blood his master shed . . . not me!
My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,
And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul,
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall
To see, in this ill world where none are true,
My kindred false to their deserted selves.
And with considering all the wretched life
Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,
And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth
To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,
And what slaves these; and what a world we make,
The oppressor and the oppressed . . . such pangs compel
My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?
Judge. Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?
Beatrice. Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God
That He permitted such an act as that
Which I have suffered, and which He beheld;
Made it unutterable, and took from it
All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,
But that which thou hast called my father's death?
Which is or is not what men call a crime,
Which either I have done, or have not done;
Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.
If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,
And so an end of all. Now do your will;
No other pains shall force another word.
Judge. She is convicted, but has not confessed.
Be it enough. Until their final sentence
Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,
Linger not here!
Beatrice. Oh, tear him not away!
Judge. Guards, do your duty.

Bernardo (*embracing* Beatrice). Oh! would ye divide
Body from soul?
Officer. That is the headsman's business.
[*Exeunt all but* Lucretia, Beatrice, *and* Giacomo.
Giacomo. Have I confessed? Is it all over now?
No hope! No refuge! O weak, wicked tongue
Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been
Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have killed
My father first, and then betrayed my sister;
Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure
In this black guilty world, to that which I
So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!
Destitute, helpless, and I . . . Father! God!
Canst Thou forgive even the unforgiving,
When their full hearts break thus, thus! . . .
[*Covers his face and weeps.*
Lucretia. O my child!
To what a dreadful end are we all come!
Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain
Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved
Into these fast and unavailing tears,
Which flow and feel not!
Beatrice. What 'twas weak to do,
'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;
Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made
Our speedy act the angel of His wrath,
Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.
Let us not think that we shall die for this.
Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,
You had a manly heart. Bear up! Bear up!
O dearest Lady, put your gentle head
Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:
Your eyes look pale, hollow and overworn,
With heaviness of watching and slow grief.
Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,
Some outworn and unused monotony,
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,
Till they almost forget they live: lie down!
So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?
Faith! They are sadder than I thought they were.

SONG

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep
When my life is laid asleep?
Little cares for a smile or a tear,
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!
Farewell! Heigho!
What is this whispers low?
There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;
And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep, were death like to thee,
Or if thou couldst mortal be,
I would close these eyes of pain;
When to wake? Never again.
O World! Farewell!
Listen to the passing bell!
It says, thou and I must part,
With a light and a heavy heart. [*The scene closes.*

SCENE IV.—*A Hall of the Prison. Enter* CAMILLO *and* BERNARDO.

Camillo. The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.
He looked as calm and keen as is the engine
Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself
From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,
A rite, a law, a custom: not a man.
He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick
Of his machinery, on the advocates
Presenting the defences, which he tore
And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice:
'Which among ye defended their old father
Killed in his sleep?' Then to another: 'Thou
Dost this in virtue of thy place; 'tis well.'
He turned to me then, looking deprecation,
And said these three words, coldly: 'They must die.'
Bernardo. And yet you left him not?
Camillo. I urged him still;
Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.
And he replied: 'Paolo Santa Croce
Murdered his mother yester evening,
And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife
That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young
Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.
Authority, and power, and hoary hair
Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,
You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment;
Here is their sentence; never see me more
Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled.'
Bernardo. O God, not so! I did believe indeed
That all you said was but sad preparation
For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks
To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them,
Now I forget them at my dearest need.
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain
With my perpetual cries, until in rage
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood
May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,

And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!
Oh, wait till I return! [*Rushes out.*
Camillo. Alas! poor boy!
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray
To the deaf sea.

Enter Lucretia, Beatrice, *and* Giacomo, *guarded.*

Beatrice. I hardly dare to fear
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.
Camillo. May God in heaven be less inexorable
To the Pope's prayers, than he has been to mine.
Here is the sentence and the warrant.
Beatrice (*wildly*). O
My God! Can it be possible I have
To die so suddenly? So young to go
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
To be nailed down into a narrow place;
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost—
How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be . . .
What? Oh, where am I? Let me not go mad!
Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be
No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;
The wide, gray, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!
If all things then should be . . . my father's spirit,
His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me;
The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!
If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,
Even the form which tortured me on earth,
Masked in gray hairs and wrinkles, he should come
And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix
His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!
For was he not alone omnipotent
On Earth, and ever present? Even though dead,
Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,
And work for me and mine still the same ruin,
Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned
To teach the laws of Death's untrodden realm?
Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,
Oh, whither, whither?
Lucretia. Trust in God's sweet love,
The tender promises of Christ: ere night,
Think, we shall be in Paradise.
Beatrice. 'Tis past!
Whatever comes my heart shall sink no more.
And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:
How tedious, false and cold seem all things. I
Have met with much injustice in this world;
No difference has been made by God or man,
Or any power moulding my wretched lot,

'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.
I am cut off from the only world I know,
From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.
You do well telling me to trust in God,
I hope I do trust in Him. In whom else
Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.
[*During the latter speeches* GIACOMO *has retired conversing with* CAMILLO, *who now goes out;* GIACOMO *advances.*

Giacomo. Know you not, Mother . . . Sister, know you not?
Bernardo even now is gone to implore
The Pope to grant our pardon.

Lucretia. Child, perhaps
It will be granted. We may all then live
To make these woes a tale for distant years:
Oh, what a thought! It gushes to my heart
Like the warm blood.

Beatrice. Yet both will soon be cold.
Oh, trample out that thought! Worse than despair,
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:
It is the only ill which can find place
Upon the giddy, sharp and narrow hour
Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:
Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch
Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free;
Now stench and blackness yawn, like death. Oh, plead
With famine, or wind-walking Pestilence,
Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man!
Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words,
In deeds a Cain. No, Mother, we must die:
Since such is the reward of innocent lives;
Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.
And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,
Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears
To death as to life's sleep; 'twere just the grave
Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death,
And wind me in thine all-embracing arms!
Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,
And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.
Live ye, who live, subject to one another
As we were once, who now . . .

BERNARDO *rushes in.*

Bernardo. Oh, horrible!
That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,
Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,
Should all be vain! The ministers of death
Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw
Blood on the face of one . . . What if 'twere fancy?
Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth

105 yawn *ed. 1821*; yawns *edd. 1819, 1839.*

Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off
As if 'twere only rain. O life! O world!
Cover me! let me be no more! To see
That perfect mirror of pure innocence
Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,
Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,
Who made all lovely thou didst look upon . . .
Thee, light of life . . . dead, dark! while I say, sister,
To hear I have no sister; and thou, Mother,
Whose love was as a bond to all our loves . . .
Dead! The sweet bond broken!

Enter Camillo *and Guards.*

They come! Let me
Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves
Are blighted . . . white . . . cold. Say farewell, before
Death chokes that gentle voice! Oh, let me hear
You speak!
Beatrice. Farewell, my tender brother. Think
Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:
And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee
Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,
But tears and patience. One thing more, my child:
For thine own sake be constant to the love
Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,
Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame,
Lived ever holy and unstained. And though
Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name
Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow
For men to point at as they pass, do thou
Forbear, and never think a thought unkind
Of those, who perhaps love thee in their graves.
So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain
Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
Bernardo. I cannot say, farewell!
Camillo. Oh, Lady Beatrice!
Beatrice. Give yourself no unnecessary pain,
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, Mother, tie
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair
In any simple knot; ay, that does well.
And yours I see is coming down. How often
Have we done this for one another; now
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,
We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.

THE END.

136 was as a *Rossetti cj.*; was a *edd. 1819, 1821, 1839.*

NOTE ON THE CENCI, BY MRS. SHELLEY

The sort of mistake that Shelley made as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which Nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy: he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and above all (though at that time not exactly aware of the fact) I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot,—or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote *The Cenci*.

On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following-up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective in this portion of imagination: it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others, though he laid great store by it as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract, too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself; for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I: and he had written to me: 'Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of *St. Leon* begins with this proud and true sentiment: "There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute." Shakespeare was only a human being.' These words were written in 1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of the Cenci. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her appalling story. Shelley's imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt my incompetence; but I entreated him to write it instead; and he began, and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth (never, alas, through his untimely death, worked to its depths)—his richly gifted mind.

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss[1]. Some friends of ours were residing in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a *podere*; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fireflies flashed from among the myrtle hedges: Nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

At the top of the house there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed: this one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed. This Shelley made his study; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became waterspouts that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of *The Cenci*. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius; but it shows his judgement and originality that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of *The Cenci*; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage to which he himself alludes as suggested by one in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*.

Shelley wished *The Cenci* to be acted. He was not a playgoer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling-up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he saw Miss O'Neil several times. She was then in the zenith of her glory; and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, and sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote: and, when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend in London:

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[1] Such feelings haunted him when, in *The Cenci*, he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of
'that fair blue-eyed child
Who was the lodestar of your life:'—
and say—
'All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or done therein
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.'

'The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I have attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian MS. on which my play is founded; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed as an acting play hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection; considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it[1].

'I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or not. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present; founding my hopes on this—that, as a composition, it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of *Remorse*; that the interest of the plot is incredibly greater and more real; and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed, this is essential, deeply essential, to its success. After it had been acted, and successfully (could I hope for such a thing), I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

'What I want you to do is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O'Neil, and it might even seem to have been written for her (God forbid that I should see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces); and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play. That is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor.'

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[1] In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci's worst crime. Every one knew what it must be, but it was never imaged in words—the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci's curse beginning—

'That, if she have a child,' etc.

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to ensure its correctness; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped *The Cenci* as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said: 'I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, *words, words*.' There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding, from vehement struggle, to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding, poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way; and, even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments, with regard to human nature and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul.

THE MASK OF ANARCHY

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE MASSACRE AT MANCHESTER

[Composed at the Villa Valsovano near Leghorn—or possibly later, during Shelley's sojourn at Florence—in the autumn of 1819, shortly after the Peterloo riot at Manchester, August 16; edited with Preface by Leigh Hunt, and published under the poet's name by Edward Moxon, 1832 (Bradbury & Evans, printers). Two MSS. are extant: a transcript by Mrs. Shelley with Shelley's autograph corrections, known as the 'Hunt MS.'; and an earlier draft, not quite complete, in the poet's handwriting, presented by Mrs. Shelley to (Sir) John Bowring in 1826, and now in the possession of Mr. Thomas J. Wise (the 'Wise MS.'). Mrs. Shelley's copy was sent to Leigh Hunt in 1819 with a view to its publication in *The Examiner*; hence the name 'Hunt MS.' A facsimile of the Wise MS. was published by the Shelley Society in 1887. Sources of the text are (1) the Hunt MS.; (2) the Wise MS.; (3) the *editio princeps*, ed. Leigh Hunt, 1832; (4) Mrs. Shelley's two edd. (*Poetical Works*) of 1839. Of the two MSS. Mrs. Shelley's transcript is the later and more authoritative.]

I

As I lay asleep in Italy
There came a voice from over the Sea,
And with great power it forth led me
To walk in the visions of Poesy.

II

I met Murder on the way—
He had a mask like Castlereagh—
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;
Seven blood-hounds followed him:

III

All were fat; and well they might
Be in admirable plight,
For one by one, and two by two,
He tossed them human hearts to chew
Which from his wide cloak he drew.

IV

Next came Fraud, and he had on,
Like Eldon, an ermined gown;
His big tears, for he wept well,
Turned to mill-stones as they fell.

V

And the little children, who
Round his feet played to and fro,
Thinking every tear a gem,
Had their brains knocked out by them.

VI

Clothed with the Bible, as with light,
And the shadows of the night,
Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy
On a crocodile rode by.

VII

And many more Destructions played
In this ghastly masquerade,
All disguised, even to the eyes,
Like Bishops, lawyers, peers, or spies.

VIII

Last came Anarchy: he rode
On a white horse, splashed with blood;
He was pale even to the lips,
Like Death in the Apocalypse.

IX

And he wore a kingly crown;
And in his grasp a sceptre shone;
On his brow this mark I saw—
'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'

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15 Like Eldon *Hunt MS.*; Like Lord Eldon *Wise MS.* ermined *Hunt MS., Wise MS., ed. 1832*; ermine *edd. 1839*. 23 shadows] shadow *edd. 1839 only*. 29 or] and *Wise MS. only*. 35 And in his grasp *Hunt MS., ed. 1832*; In his hand *Wise MS., Hunt MS. cancelled, ed. 1839*. 36 On his] And on his *ed. 1832 only*.

X

With a pace stately and fast,
Over English land he passed,
Trampling to a mire of blood
The adoring multitude.

XI

And a mighty troop around,
With their trampling shook the ground,
Waving each a bloody sword,
For the service of their Lord.

XII

And with glorious triumph, they
Rode through England proud and gay,
Drunk as with intoxication
Of the wine of desolation.

XIII

O'er fields and towns, from sea to sea,
Passed the Pageant swift and free,
Tearing up, and trampling down;
Till they came to London town.

XIV

And each dweller, panic-stricken,
Felt his heart with terror sicken
Hearing the tempestuous cry
Of the triumph of Anarchy.

XV

For with pomp to meet him came,
Clothed in arms like blood and flame,
The hired murderers, who did sing
'Thou art God, and Law, and King.

XVI

'We have waited, weak and lone
For thy coming, Mighty One!
Our purses are empty, our swords are cold,
Give us glory, and blood, and gold.'

XVII

Lawyers and priests, a motley crowd,
To the earth their pale brows bowed;
Like a bad prayer not over loud,
Whispering—'Thou art Law and God.'—

XVIII

Then all cried with one accord,
'Thou art King, and God, and Lord;
Anarchy, to thee we bow,
Be thy name made holy now!'

XIX

And Anarchy, the Skeleton,
Bowed and grinned to every one,
As well as if his education
Had cost ten millions to the nation.

XX

For he knew the Palaces
Of our Kings were rightly his;
His the sceptre, crown, and globe,
And the gold-inwoven robe.

XXI

So he sent his slaves before
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,
And was proceeding with intent
To meet his pensioned Parliament

XXII

When one fled past, a maniac maid,
And her name was Hope, she said:
But she looked more like Despair,
And she cried out in the air:

XXIII

'My father Time is weak and gray
With waiting for a better day;
See how idiot-like he stands,
Fumbling with his palsied hands!

XXIV

'He has had child after child,
And the dust of death is piled
Over every one but me—
Misery, oh, Misery!'

XXV

Then she lay down in the street,
Right before the horses' feet,
Expecting, with a patient eye,
Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.

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51 the *Hunt MS.*, *ed. 1832*; that *Wise MS.* 56 tempestuous] tremendous *edd. 1839 only.* 58 For with pomp] For from . . . *Hunt MS.*, *Wise MS.* 71 God] Law *edd. 1839 only.* 79 rightly *Wise MS.*; nightly *Hunt MS.*, *edd. 1832, 1839.* 93 Fumbling] Trembling *edd. 1839 only.*

XXVI

When between her and her foes
A mist, a light, an image rose,
Small at first, and weak, and frail
Like the vapour of a vale:

XXVII

Till as clouds grow on the blast,
Like tower-crowned giants striding fast,
And glare with lightnings as they fly,
And speak in thunder to the sky,

XXVIII

It grew—a Shape arrayed in mail
Brighter than the viper's scale,
And upborne on wings whose grain
Was as the light of sunny rain.

XXIX

On its helm, seen far away,
A planet, like the Morning's, lay;
And those plumes its light rained through
Like a shower of crimson dew.

XXX

With step as soft as wind it passed
O'er the heads of men—so fast
That they knew the presence there,
And looked,—but all was empty air.

XXXI

As flowers beneath May's footstep waken,
As stars from Night's loose hair are shaken,
As waves arise when loud winds call,
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.

XXXII

And the prostrate multitude
Looked—and ankle-deep in blood,
Hope, that maiden most serene,
Was walking with a quiet mien:

XXXIII

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,
Lay dead earth upon the earth;
The Horse of Death tameless as wind
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind
To dust the murderers thronged behind.

XXXIV

A rushing light of clouds and splendour,
A sense awakening and yet tender
Was heard and felt—and at its close
These words of joy and fear arose

XXXV

As if their own indignant Earth
Which gave the sons of England birth
Had felt their blood upon her brow,
And shuddering with a mother's throe

XXXVI

Had turned every drop of blood
By which her face had been bedewed
To an accent unwithstood,—
As if her heart had cried aloud:

XXXVII

'Men of England, heirs of Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,
Hopes of her, and one another;

XXXVIII

'Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few.

XXXIX

'What is Freedom?—ye can tell
That which slavery is, too well—
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

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105 a vale *Hunt MS.*, *Wise MS.*; the vale *edd. 1832, 1839.* 113 as] like *edd. 1839 only.* 116 its *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*; it *edd. 1832, 1839.* 121 but *Wise MS.*; and *Hunt MS., edd. 1832, 1839.* 122 May's footstep *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*; the footstep *ed. 1832*; May's footsteps *edd. 1839.* 132-4 *omit Wise MS.* 146 had cried *Hunt MS., edd. 1832, 1839*; cried out *Wise MS.* 155 *omit ed. 1832 only.*

XL

‘’Tis to work and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell
For the tyrants’ use to dwell,

XLI

‘So that ye for them are made
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade,
With or without your own will bent
To their defence and nourishment.

XLII

‘’Tis to see your children weak
With their mothers pine and peak,
When the winter winds are bleak,—
They are dying whilst I speak.

XLIII

‘’Tis to hunger for such diet
As the rich man in his riot
Casts to the fat dogs that lie
Surfeiting beneath his eye;

XLIV

‘’Tis to let the Ghost of Gold
Take from Toil a thousandfold
More than e’er its substance could
In the tyrannies of old.

XLV

‘Paper coin—that forgery
Of the title-deeds, which ye
Hold to something of the worth
Of the inheritance of Earth.

XLVI

‘’Tis to be a slave in soul
And to hold no strong control
Over your own wills, but be
All that others make of ye.

XLVII

‘And at length when ye complain
With a murmur weak and vain
’Tis to see the Tyrant’s crew
Ride over your wives and you—
Blood is on the grass like dew.

XLVIII

‘Then it is to feel revenge
Fiercely thirsting to exchange
Blood for blood—and wrong for wrong—
Do not thus when ye are strong.

XLIX

‘Birds find rest, in narrow nest
When weary of their wingèd quest;
Beasts find fare, in woody lair
When storm and snow are in the air[1].

L

‘Asses, swine, have litter spread
And with fitting food are fed;
All things have a home but one—
Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!

LI

‘This is Slavery—savage men,
Or wild beasts within a den
Would endure not as ye do—
But such ills they never knew.

LII

‘What art thou Freedom? O! could slaves
Answer from their living graves
This demand—tyrants would flee
Like a dream’s dim imagery:

LIII

‘Thou art not, as impostors say,
A shadow soon to pass away,
A superstition, and a name
Echoing from the cave of Fame.

LIV

‘For the labourer thou art bread,
And a comely table spread
From his daily labour come
In a neat and happy home.

182 of] from *Wise MS. only*. 186 wills *Hunt MS., edd. 1832, 1839*; will *Wise MS.* 198 their *Wise MS., Hunt MS., edd. 1839*; the *ed. 1832*. 216 cave *Wise MS., Hunt MS., edd. 1839*; caves *ed. 1832, Hunt MS. cancelled*. 220 In *Wise MS., edd. 1832, 1839*; To *Hunt MS.*

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[1] The following stanza is found in the Wise MS. and in edd. 1839, but is wanting in the Hunt MS. and in ed. 1832:—

‘Horses, oxen, have a home,
When from daily toil they come;
Household dogs, when the wind roars,
Find a home within warm doors.’

LV

'Thou art clothes, and fire, and food
For the trampled multitude—
No—in countries that are free
Such starvation cannot be
As in England now we see.

LVI

'To the rich thou art a check,
When his foot is on the neck
Of his victim, thou dost make
That he treads upon a snake.

LVII

'Thou art Justice—ne'er for gold
May thy righteous laws be sold
As laws are in England—thou
Shield'st alike the high and low.

LVIII

'Thou art Wisdom—Freemen never
Dream that God will damn for ever
All who think those things untrue
Of which Priests make such ado.

LIX

'Thou art Peace—never by thee
Would blood and treasure wasted be
As tyrants wasted them, when all
Leagued to quench thy flame in Gaul.

LX

'What if English toil and blood
Was poured forth, even as a flood?
It availed, Oh, Liberty,
To dim, but not extinguish thee.

LXI

'Thou art Love—the rich have kissed
Thy feet, and like him following Christ,
Give their substance to the free
And through the rough world follow thee,

LXII

'Or turn their wealth to arms, and make
War for thy belovèd sake
On wealth, and war, and fraud—whence they
Drew the power which is their prey.

LXIII

'Science, Poetry, and Thought
Are thy lamps; they make the lot
Of the dwellers in a cot
So serene, they curse it not.

LXIV

'Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,
All that can adorn and bless
Art thou—let deeds, not words, express
Thine exceeding loveliness.

LXV

'Let a great Assembly be
Of the fearless and the free
On some spot of English ground
Where the plains stretch wide around.

LXVI

'Let the blue sky overhead,
The green earth on which ye tread,
All that must eternal be
Witness the solemnity.

LXVII

'From the corners uttermost
Of the bounds of English coast;
From every hut, village, and town
Where those who live and suffer moan
For others' misery or their own[1],

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233 the *Hunt MS., edd. 1832, 1839*; both *Wise MS.* 234 Freemen *Wise MS., Hunt MS., edd. 1839*; Freedom *ed. 1832.* 235 Dream *Wise MS., Hunt MS., edd. 1839*; Dreams *ed. 1832.* damn] doom *edd. 1839 only.* 248 Give *Hunt MS., ed. 1832*; Given *Wise MS., Hunt MS. cancelled, edd. 1839.* 249 follow] followed *edd. 1839 only.* 250 Or *Wise MS., Hunt MS.*; Oh *edd. 1832, 1839.* 254 Science, Poetry, *Wise MS., Hunt MS.*; Science, and Poetry *edd. 1832, 1839.* 257 So *Hunt MS., ed. 1832*; Such they curse their Maker not *Wise MS., edd. 1839.* 263 and] of *ed. 1832 only.* 274 or] and *ed. 1832 only.*

[1] The following stanza is found (cancelled) at this place in the Wise MS.:—

'From the cities where from caves,
Like the dead from putrid graves,
Troops of starvelings gilding come,
Living Tenants of a tomb.'

LXVIII

'From the workhouse and the prison
Where pale as corpses newly risen,
Women, children, young and old
Groan for pain, and weep for cold—

LXIX

'From the haunts of daily life
Where is waged the daily strife
With common wants and common cares
Which sows the human heart with tares—

LXX

'Lastly from the palaces
Where the murmur of distress
Echoes, like the distant sound
Of a wind alive around

LXXI

'Those prison halls of wealth and fashion,
Where some few feel such compassion
For those who groan, and toil, and wail
As must make their brethren pale—

LXXII

'Ye who suffer woes untold,
Or to feel, or to behold
Your lost country bought and sold
With a price of blood and gold—

LXXIII

'Let a vast assembly be,
And with great solemnity
Declare with measured words that ye
Are, as God has made ye, free—

LXXIV

'Be your strong and simple words
Keen to wound as sharpened swords,
And wide as targes let them be,
With their shade to cover ye.

LXXV

'Let the tyrants pour around
With a quick and startling sound,
Like the loosening of a sea,
Troops of armed emblazonry.

LXXVI

'Let the charged artillery drive
Till the dead air seems alive
With the clash of clanging wheels,
And the tramp of horses' heels.

LXXVII

'Let the fixèd bayonet
Gleam with sharp desire to wet
Its bright point in English blood
Looking keen as one for food.

LXXVIII

'Let the horsemen's scimitars
Wheel and flash, like sphereless stars
Thirsting to eclipse their burning
In a sea of death and mourning.

LXXIX

'Stand ye calm and resolute,
Like a forest close and mute,
With folded arms and looks which are
Weapons of unvanquished war,

LXXX

'And let Panic, who outspeeds
The career of armèd steeds
Pass, a disregarded shade
Through your phalanx undismayed.

LXXXI

'Let the laws of your own land,
Good or ill, between ye stand
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,
Arbiters of the dispute,

LXXXII

'The old laws of England—they
Whose reverend heads with age are gray,
Children of a wiser day;
And whose solemn voice must be
Thine own echo—Liberty!

LXXXIII

'On those who first should violate
Such sacred heralds in their state
Rest the blood that must ensue,
And it will not rest on you.

282 sows *Wise MS., Hunt MS.*; sow *edd. 1832, 1839.* 297 measured *Wise MS., Hunt MS., ed. 1832*; ne'er-said *edd. 1839.* 322 of unvanquished *Wise MS.*; of an unvanquished *Hunt MS., edd. 1832, 1839.*

LXXXIV

'And if then the tyrants dare
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew,—
What they like, that let them do.

LXXXV

'With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away.

LXXXVI

'Then they will return with shame
To the place from which they came,
And the blood thus shed will speak
In hot blushes on their cheek.

LXXXVII

'Every woman in the land
Will point at them as they stand—
They will hardly dare to greet
Their acquaintance in the street.

LXXXVIII

'And the bold, true warriors
Who have hugged Danger in wars
Will turn to those who would be free,
Ashamed of such base company.

LXXXIX

'And that slaughter to the Nation
Shall steam up like inspiration,
Eloquent, oracular;
A volcano heard afar.

XC

'And these words shall then become
Like Oppression's thundered doom
Ringing through each heart and brain,
Heard again—again—again—

XCI

'Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number—
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few.'

NOTE ON THE MASK OF ANARCHY, BY MRS. SHELLEY

Though Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during 'the good old times' had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature; the necessaries of life when fairly earned by labour, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism that looked upon the people as not to be consulted, or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing *The Cenci*, when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote the *Mask of Anarchy*, which he sent to his friend Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the *Examiner*, of which he was then the Editor.

'I did not insert it,' Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, 'because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse.' Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would

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346 slay *Wise MS., Hunt MS., edd. 1839*; stay *ed. 1832.* 357 in wars *Wise MS., Hunt MS., ed. 1832*; in the wars *edd. 1839.*

cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day. But they rose when human life was respected by the Minister in power; such was not the case during the Administration which excited Shelley's abhorrence.

The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual: portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired, those beginning

'My Father Time is old and gray,'

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty; it might make a patriot of any man whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.

PETER BELL THE THIRD

BY MICHING MALLECHO, Esq.

Is it a party in a parlour,
Crammed just as they on earth were crammed,
Some sipping punch—some sipping tea;
But, as you by their faces see,
All silent, and all —— damned!

Peter Bell, by W. Wordsworth.

Ophelia.—What means this, my lord?
Hamlet.—Marry, this is Miching Mallecho; it means mischief.

Shakespeare.

[Composed at Florence, October, 1819, and forwarded to Hunt (Nov. 2) to be published by C. & J. Ollier without the author's name; ultimately printed by Mrs. Shelley in the second edition of the *Poetical Works*, 1839. A skit by John Hamilton Reynolds, *Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad*, had already appeared (April, 1819), a few days before the publication of Wordsworth's *Peter Bell, a Tale*. These productions were reviewed in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* (April 26, May 3, 1819); and to the entertainment derived from his perusal of Hunt's criticisms the composition of Shelley's *Peter Bell the Third* is chiefly owing.]

DEDICATION

TO THOMAS BROWN, ESQ., THE YOUNGER, H.F.

Dear Tom—Allow me to request you to introduce Mr. Peter Bell to the respectable family of the Fudges. Although he may fall short of those very considerable personages in the more active properties which characterize the Rat and the Apostate, I suspect that even you, their historian, will confess that he surpasses them in the more peculiarly legitimate qualification of intolerable dulness.

You know Mr. Examiner Hunt; well —it was he who presented me to two of the Mr. Bells. My intimacy with the younger Mr. Bell naturally sprung from this introduction to his brothers. And in presenting him to you, I have the satisfaction of being able to assure you that he is considerably the dullest of the three.

There is this particular advantage in an acquaintance with any one of the Peter Bells, that if you know one Peter Bell, you know three Peter Bells; they are not one, but three; not three, but one. An awful mystery, which, after having caused torrents of blood, and having been hymned by groans enough to deafen the music of the spheres, is at length illustrated to the satisfaction of all parties in the theological world, by the nature of Mr. Peter Bell.

Peter is a polyhedric Peter, or a Peter with many sides. He changes colours like a chameleon, and his coat like a snake. He is a Proteus of a Peter. He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound; then dull; then prosy and dull; and now dull—oh so very dull! it is an ultra-legitimate dulness.

You will perceive that it is not necessary to consider Hell and the Devil as supernatural machinery. The whole scene of my epic is in 'this world which is'—so Peter informed us before his conversion to *White Obi*—

> 'The world of all of us, *and where*
> *We find our happiness, or not at all.*'

Let me observe that I have spent six or seven days in composing this sublime piece; the orb of my moon-like genius has made the fourth part of its revolution round the dull earth which you inhabit, driving you mad, while it has retained its calmness and its splendour, and I have been fitting this its last phase 'to occupy a permanent station in the literature of my country.'

Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge; posterity sets all to rights.

Allow me to observe that so much has been written of Peter Bell, that the present history can be considered only, like the *Iliad*, as a continuation of that series of cyclic poems, which have already been candidates for bestowing immortality upon, at the same time that they receive it from, his character and adventures. In this point of view I have violated no rule of syntax in beginning my composition with a conjunction; the full stop which closes the poem continued by me being, like the full stops at the end of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a full stop of a very qualified import.

Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the Fudges, you will receive from them; and in the firm expectation, that when London shall be an habitation of bitterns; when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh; when the piers of Waterloo Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism, the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges, and their historians. I remain, dear Tom, yours sincerely,

MICHING MALLECHO.

December 1, 1819.

P.S.—Pray excuse the date of place; so soon as the profits of the publication come in, I mean to hire lodgings in a more respectable street.

PROLOGUE

PETER BELLS, one, two and three,
O'er the wide world wandering be.—
First, the antenatal Peter,
Wrapped in weeds of the same metre,
The so-long-predestined raiment
Clothed in which to walk his way meant
The second Peter; whose ambition
Is to link the proposition,
As the mean of two extremes—
(This was learned from Aldric's themes)
Shielding from the guilt of schism
The orthodoxal syllogism;
The First Peter—he who was
Like the shadow in the glass
Of the second, yet unripe,
His substantial antitype.—

10 Aldric's] *i. e. Aldrich's—a spelling adopted here by Woodberry.*

Then came Peter Bell the Second,
Who henceforward must be reckoned
The body of a double soul,
And that portion of the whole
Without which the rest would seem
Ends of a disjointed dream.—
And the Third is he who has
O'er the grave been forced to pass
To the other side, which is,—
Go and try else,—just like this.

Peter Bell the First was Peter
Smugger, milder, softer, neater,
Like the soul before it is
Born from *that* world into *this*.
The next Peter Bell was he,
Predevote, like you and me,
To good or evil as may come;
His was the severer doom,—
For he was an evil Cotter,
And a polygamic Potter.[1]
And the last is Peter Bell,
Damned since our first parents fell,
Damned eternally to Hell—
Surely he deserves it well!

PART THE FIRST

DEATH

I

And Peter Bell, when he had been
With fresh-imported Hell-fire warmed,
Grew serious—from his dress and mien
'Twas very plainly to be seen
Peter was quite reformed.

II

His eyes turned up, his mouth turned down;
His accent caught a nasal twang;
He oiled his hair[2]; there might be heard
The grace of God in every word
Which Peter said or sang.

III

But Peter now grew old, and had
An ill no doctor could unravel;
His torments almost drove him mad;—
Some said it was a fever bad—
Some swore it was the gravel.

IV

His holy friends then came about,
And with long preaching and persuasion
Convinced the patient that, without
The smallest shadow of a doubt,
He was predestined to damnation.

V

They said—'Thy name is Peter Bell;
Thy skin is of a brimstone hue;
Alive or dead—ay, sick or well—
The one God made to rhyme with hell;
The other, I think, rhymes with you.'

VI

Then Peter set up such a yell!—
The nurse, who with some water gruel
Was climbing up the stairs, as well
As her old legs could climb them—fell,
And broke them both—the fall was cruel.

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[1] The oldest scholiasts read—

A *dodecagamic* Potter.

This is at once more descriptive and more megalophonous,—but the alliteration of the text had captivated the vulgar ear of the herd of later commentators.—[Shelley's Note.]

[2] To those who have not duly appreciated the distinction between *Whale* and *Russia* oil, this attribute might rather seem to belong to the Dandy than the Evangelic. The effect, when to the windward, is indeed so similar, that it requires a subtle naturalist to discriminate the animals. They belong, however, to distinct genera.—[Shelley's Note.]

VII

The Parson from the casement lept
  Into the lake of Windermere—
And many an eel—though no adept
In God's right reason for it—kept
  Gnawing his kidneys half a year.

VIII

And all the rest rushed through the door,
  And tumbled over one another,
And broke their skulls.—Upon the floor
Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and swore,
  And cursed his father and his mother;

IX

And raved of God, and sin, and death,
  Blaspheming like an infidel;
And said, that with his clenchèd teeth
He'd seize the earth from underneath,
  And drag it with him down to hell.

X

As he was speaking came a spasm,
  And wrenched his gnashing teeth asunder;
Like one who sees a strange phantasm
He lay,—there was a silent chasm
  Between his upper jaw and under.

XI

And yellow death lay on his face;
  And a fixed smile that was not human
Told, as I understand the case,
That he was gone to the wrong place:—
  I heard all this from the old woman.

XII

Then there came down from Langdale Pike
  A cloud, with lightning, wind and hail;
It swept over the mountains like
An ocean,—and I heard it strike
  The woods and crags of Grasmere vale.

XIII

And I saw the black storm come
  Nearer, minute after minute;
Its thunder made the cataracts dumb;
With hiss, and clash, and hollow hum,
  It neared as if the Devil was in it.

XIV

The Devil *was* in it:—he had bought
  Peter for half-a-crown; and when
The storm which bore him vanished, nought
That in the house that storm had caught
  Was ever seen again.

XV

The gaping neighbours came next day—
  They found all vanished from the shore:
The Bible, whence he used to pray,
Half scorched under a hen-coop lay;
  Smashed glass—and nothing more!

PART THE SECOND

THE DEVIL

I

The Devil, I safely can aver,
  Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting;
Nor is he, as some sages swear,
A spirit, neither here nor there,
  In nothing—yet in everything.

II

He is—what we are; for sometimes
  The Devil is a gentleman;
At others a bard bartering rhymes
For sack; a statesman spinning crimes;
  A swindler, living as he can;

III

A thief, who cometh in the night,
  With whole boots and net pantaloons,
Like some one whom it were not right
To mention;—or the luckless wight
  From whom he steals nine silver spoons.

IV

But in this case he did appear
Like a slop-merchant from Wapping,
And with smug face, and eye severe,
On every side did perk and peer
Till he saw Peter dead or napping.

V

He had on an upper Benjamin
(For he was of the driving schism)
In the which he wrapped his skin
From the storm he travelled in,
For fear of rheumatism.

VI

He called the ghost out of the corse;—
It was exceedingly like Peter,—
Only its voice was hollow and hoarse—
It had a queerish look of course—
Its dress too was a little neater.

VII

The Devil knew not his name and lot;
Peter knew not that he was Bell:
Each had an upper stream of thought,
Which made all seem as it was not;
Fitting itself to all things well.

VIII

Peter thought he had parents dear,
Brothers, sisters, cousins, cronies,
In the fens of Lincolnshire;
He perhaps had found them there
Had he gone and boldly shown his

IX

Solemn phiz in his own village;
Where he thought oft when a boy
He'd clomb the orchard walls to pillage
The produce of his neighbour's tillage,
With marvellous pride and joy.

X

And the Devil thought he had,
'Mid the misery and confusion
Of an unjust war, just made
A fortune by the gainful trade
Of giving soldiers rations bad—
The world is full of strange delusion—

XI

That he had a mansion planned
In a square like Grosvenor Square,
That he was aping fashion, and
That he now came to Westmoreland
To see what was romantic there.

XII

And all this, though quite ideal,—
Ready at a breath to vanish,—
Was a state not more unreal
Than the peace he could not feel,
Or the care he could not banish.

XIII

After a little conversation,
The Devil told Peter, if he chose,
He'd bring him to the world of fashion
By giving him a situation
In his own service—and new clothes.

XIV

And Peter bowed, quite pleased and proud,
And after waiting some few days
For a new livery—dirty yellow
Turned up with black—the wretched fellow
Was bowled to Hell in the Devil's chaise.

PART THE THIRD

HELL

I

Hell is a city much like London—
A populous and a smoky city;
There are all sorts of people undone,
And there is little or no fun done;
Small justice shown, and still less pity.

II

There is a Castles, and a Canning,
A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh;
All sorts of caitiff corpses planning
All sorts of cozening for trepanning
Corpses less corrupt than they.

III

There is a * * *, who has lost
His wits, or sold them, none knows which ;
He walks about a double ghost,
And though as thin as Fraud almost—
Ever grows more grim and rich.

IV

There is a Chancery Court ; a King ;
A manufacturing mob ; a set
Of thieves who by themselves are sent
Similar thieves to represent ;
An army ; and a public debt.

V

Which last is a scheme of paper money,
And means—being interpreted—
'Bees, keep your wax—give us the honey,
And we will plant, while skies are sunny,
Flowers, which in winter serve instead.'

VI

There is a great talk of revolution—
And a great chance of despotism—
German soldiers — camps — confusion—
Tumults — lotteries — rage — delusion—
Gin—suicide—and methodism ;

VII

Taxes too, on wine and bread,
And meat, and beer, and tea, and cheese,
From which those patriots pure are fed,
Who gorge before they reel to bed
The tenfold essence of all these.

VIII

There are mincing women, mewing,
(Like cats, who *amant miserè* [1],)
Of their own virtue, and pursuing
Their gentler sisters to that ruin,
Without which—what were chastity? [2]

IX

Lawyers—judges—old hobnobbers
Are there—bailiffs—chancellors—
Bishops—great and little robbers—
Rhymesters—pamphleteers—stock-jobbers—
Men of glory in the wars,—

X

Things whose trade is, over ladies
To lean, and flirt, and stare, and simper,
Till all that is divine in woman
Grows cruel, courteous, smooth, inhuman,
Crucified 'twixt a smile and whimper.

XI

Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moiling,
Frowning, preaching — such a riot!
Each with never-ceasing labour,
Whilst he thinks he cheats his neighbour,
Cheating his own heart of quiet.

XII

And all these meet at levees ;—
Dinners convivial and political ;—
Suppers of epic poets ;—teas,
Where small talk dies in agonies ;—
Breakfasts professional and critical ;

---

[1] One of the attributes in Linnaeus's description of the Cat. To a similar cause the caterwauling of more than one species of this genus is to be referred ;—except, indeed, that the poor quadruped is compelled to quarrel with its own pleasures, whilst the biped is supposed only to quarrel with those of others.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] What would this husk and excuse for a virtue be without its kernel prostitution, or the kernel prostitution without this husk of a virtue? I wonder the women of the town do not form an association, like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for the support of what may be called the 'King, Church, and Constitution' of their order. But this subject is almost too horrible for a joke.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

XIII

Lunches and snacks so aldermanic
That one would furnish forth ten dinners,
Where reigns a Cretan-tonguèd panic,
Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Alemannic
Should make some losers, and some winners;—

XIV

At conversazioni—balls—
Conventicles—and drawing-rooms—
Courts of law—committees—calls
Of a morning—clubs—book-stalls—
Churches — masquerades — and tombs.

XV

And this is Hell—and in this smother
All are damnable and damned;
Each one damning, damns the other;
They are damned by one another,
By none other are they damned.

XVI

'Tis a lie to say, 'God damns[1]!'
Where was Heaven's Attorney General
When they first gave out such flams?
Let there be an end of shams,
They are mines of poisonous mineral.

XVII

Statesmen damn themselves to be
Cursed; and lawyers damn their souls
To the auction of a fee;
Churchmen damn themselves to see
God's sweet love in burning coals.

XVIII

The rich are damned, beyond all cure,
To taunt, and starve, and trample on
The weak and wretched; and the poor
Damn their broken hearts to endure
Stripe on stripe, with groan on groan.

XIX

Sometimes the poor are damned indeed
To take,—not means for being blessed,—
But Cobbett's snuff, revenge; that weed
From which the worms that it doth feed
Squeeze less than they before possessed.

XX

And some few, like we know who,
Damned—but God alone knows why—
To believe their minds are given
To make this ugly Hell a Heaven;
In which faith they live and die.

XXI

Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken,
Each man be he sound or no
Must indifferently sicken;
As when day begins to thicken,
None knows a pigeon from a crow,—

XXII

So good and bad, sane and mad,
The oppressor and the oppressed;
Those who weep to see what others
Smile to inflict upon their brothers;
Lovers, haters, worst and best;

XXIII

All are damned—they breathe an air,
Thick, infected, joy-dispelling:
Each pursues what seems most fair,
Mining like moles, through mind, and there
Scoop palace-caverns vast, where Care
In thronèd state is ever dwelling.

---

[1] This libel on our national oath, and this accusation of all our countrymen of being in the daily practice of solemnly asseverating the most enormous falsehood, I fear deserves the notice of a more active Attorney General than that here alluded to.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

PART THE FOURTH

SIN

I

Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor Square,
A footman in the Devil's service!
And the misjudging world would swear
That every man in service there
To virtue would prefer vice.

II

But Peter, though now damned, was not
What Peter was before damnation.
Men oftentimes prepare a lot
Which ere it finds them, is not what
Suits with their genuine station.

III

All things that Peter saw and felt
Had a peculiar aspect to him;
And when they came within the belt
Of his own nature, seemed to melt,
Like cloud to cloud, into him.

IV

And so the outward world uniting
To that within him, he became
Considerably uninviting
To those who, meditation slighting,
Were moulded in a different frame.

V

And he scorned them, and they scorned him;
And he scorned all they did; and they
Did all that men of their own trim
Are wont to do to please their whim,
Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

VI

Such were his fellow-servants; thus
His virtue, like our own, was built
Too much on that indignant fuss
Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us
To bully one another's guilt.

VII

He had a mind which was somehow
At once circumference and centre
Of all he might or feel or know;
Nothing went ever out, although
Something did ever enter.

VIII

He had as much imagination
As a pint-pot;—he never could
Fancy another situation,
From which to dart his contemplation,
Than that wherein he stood.

IX

Yet his was individual mind,
And new created all he saw
In a new manner, and refined
Those new creations, and combined
Them, by a master-spirit's law.

X

Thus—though unimaginative—
An apprehension clear, intense,
Of his mind's work, had made alive
The things it wrought on; I believe
Wakening a sort of thought in sense.

XI

But from the first 'twas Peter's drift
To be a kind of moral eunuch,
He touched the hem of Nature's shift,
Felt faint—and never dared uplift
The closest, all-concealing tunic.

XII

She laughed the while, with an arch smile,
And kissed him with a sister's kiss,
And said—'My best Diogenes,
I love you well—but, if you please,
Tempt not again my deepest bliss.

XIII

''Tis you are cold—for I, not coy,
Yield love for love, frank, warm, and true;
And Burns, a Scottish peasant boy—
His errors prove it—knew my joy
More, learnèd friend, than you.

292 one *Fleay cj., Rossetti, Forman, Dowden, Woodberry*; out *1839, 2nd ed.*

XIV

'*Bocca bacciata non perde ventura,*
Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna:—
So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet words might cure a
Male prude, like you, from what you now endure, a
Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant laguna.'

XV

Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe,
And smoothed his spacious forehead down
With his broad palm;—'twixt love and fear,
He looked, as he no doubt felt, queer,
And in his dream sate down.

XVI

The Devil was no uncommon creature;
A leaden-witted thief—just huddled
Out of the dross and scum of nature;
A toad-like lump of limb and feature,
With mind, and heart, and fancy muddled.

XVII

He was that heavy, dull, cold thing,
The spirit of evil well may be:
A drone too base to have a sting;
Who gluts, and grimes his lazy wing,
And calls lust, luxury.

XVIII

Now he was quite the kind of wight
Round whom collect, at a fixed aera,
Venison, turtle, hock, and claret,—
Good cheer—and those who come to share it—
And best East Indian madeira!

XIX

It was his fancy to invite
Men of science, wit, and learning,
Who came to lend each other light;
He proudly thought that his gold's might
Had set those spirits burning.

XX

And men of learning, science, wit,
Considered him as you and I
Think of some rotten tree, and sit
Lounging and dining under it,
Exposed to the wide sky.

XXI

And all the while, with loose fat smile,
The willing wretch sat winking there,
Believing 'twas his power that made
That jovial scene—and that all paid
Homage to his unnoticed chair.

XXII

Though to be sure this place was Hell;
He was the Devil—and all they—
What though the claret circled well,
And wit, like ocean, rose and fell?—
Were damned eternally.

PART THE FIFTH

GRACE

I

Among the guests who often stayed
Till the Devil's petits-soupers,
A man there came, fair as a maid,
And Peter noted what he said,
Standing behind his master's chair.

II

He was a mighty poet—and
A subtle-souled psychologist;
All things he seemed to understand,
Of old or new—of sea or land—
But his own mind—which was a mist.

III

This was a man who might have turned
Hell into Heaven—and so in gladness
A Heaven unto himself have earned;
But he in shadows undiscerned
Trusted,—and damned himself to madness.

IV

He spoke of poetry, and how
'Divine it was—a light—a love—
A spirit which like wind doth blow
As it listeth, to and fro;
A dew rained down from God above;

V

'A power which comes and goes like dream,
And which none can ever trace—
Heaven's light on earth—Truth's brightest beam.'
And when he ceased there lay the gleam
Of those words upon his face.

VI

Now Peter, when he heard such talk,
Would, heedless of a broken pate,
Stand like a man asleep, or balk
Some wishing guest of knife or fork,
Or drop and break his master's plate.

VII

At night he oft would start and wake
Like a lover, and began
In a wild measure songs to make
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,
And on the heart of man—

VIII

And on the universal sky—
And the wide earth's bosom green,—
And the sweet, strange mystery
Of what beyond these things may lie,
And yet remain unseen.

IX

For in his thought he visited
The spots in which, ere dead and damned,
He his wayward life had led;
Yet knew not whence the thoughts were fed
Which thus his fancy crammed.

X

And these obscure remembrances
Stirred such harmony in Peter,
That, whensoever he should please,
He could speak of rocks and trees
In poetic metre.

XI

For though it was without a sense
Of memory, yet he remembered well
Many a ditch and quick-set fence;
Of lakes he had intelligence,
He knew something of heath and fell.

XII

He had also dim recollections
Of pedlars tramping on their rounds;
Milk-pans and pails; and odd collections
Of saws, and proverbs; and reflections
Old parsons make in burying-grounds.

XIII

But Peter's verse was clear, and came
Announcing from the frozen hearth
Of a cold age, that none might tame
The soul of that diviner flame
It augured to the Earth:

XIV

Like gentle rains, on the dry plains,
Making that green which late was gray,
Or like the sudden moon, that stains
Some gloomy chamber's window-panes
With a broad light like day.

XV

For language was in Peter's hand
Like clay while he was yet a potter;
And he made songs for all the land,
Sweet both to feel and understand,
As pipkins late to mountain Cotter.

XVI

And Mr. ——, the bookseller,
Gave twenty pounds for some;—then scorning
A footman's yellow coat to wear,
Peter, too proud of heart, I fear,
Instantly gave the Devil warning.

XVII

Whereat the Devil took offence,
And swore in his soul a great oath then,
'That for his damned impertinence
He'd bring him to a proper sense
Of what was due to gentlemen!'

PART THE SIXTH

DAMNATION

I

'O THAT mine enemy had written
A book!'—cried Job:—a fearful curse,
If to the Arab, as the Briton,
'Twas galling to be critic-bitten:—
The Devil to Peter wished no worse.

II

When Peter's next new book found vent,
The Devil to all the first Reviews
A copy of it slyly sent,
With five-pound note as compliment,
And this short notice—'Pray abuse.'

III

Then *seriatim*, month and quarter,
Appeared such mad tirades.—One said—
'Peter seduced Mrs. Foy's daughter,
Then drowned the mother in Ullswater,
The last thing as he went to bed.'

IV

Another—'Let him shave his head!
Where's Dr. Willis?—Or is he joking?
What does the rascal mean or hope,
No longer imitating Pope,
In that barbarian Shakespeare poking?'

V

One more, 'Is incest not enough?
And must there be adultery too?
Grace after meat? Miscreant an
Liar!
Thief! Blackguard! Scoundrel
Fool! Hell-fire
Is twenty times too good for you

VI

'By that last book of yours w
think
You've double damned yoursel
to scorn;
We warned you whilst yet on th
brink
You stood. From your black nam
will shrink
The babe that is unborn.'

VII

All these Reviews the Devil made
Up in a parcel, which he had
Safely to Peter's house conveyed.
For carriage, tenpence Peter paid—
Untied them—read them—wen
half mad.

VIII

'What!' cried he, 'this is my rewar
For nights of thought, and day
of toil?
Do poets, but to be abhorred
By men of whom they never hear
Consume their spirits' oil?

IX

'What have I done to them?—an
who
Is Mrs. Foy? 'Tis very cruel
To speak of me and Betty so!
Adultery! God defend me! Oh!
I've half a mind to fight a duel.

X

'Or,' cried he, a grave look collecting,
'Is it my genius, like the moon,
Sets those who stand her face inspecting,
That face within their brain reflecting,
Like a crazed bell-chime, out o
tune?'

---

500 Betty] Emma *1839, 2nd ed. See letter from Shelley to Ollier, May* 14, 1820 (*Shelle Memorials*, p. 139).

XI

For Peter did not know the town,
But thought, as country readers do,
For half a guinea or a crown,
He bought oblivion or renown
From God's own voice[1] in a review.

XII

All Peter did on this occasion
Was, writing some sad stuff in prose.
It is a dangerous invasion
When poets criticize; their station
Is to delight, not pose.

XIII

The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair
For Born's translation of Kant's book;
A world of words, tail foremost, where
Right — wrong — false — true — and foul — and fair
As in a lottery-wheel are shook.

XIV

Five thousand crammed octavo pages
Of German psychologics,—he
Who his *furor verborum* assuages
Thereon, deserves just seven months' wages
More than will e'er be due to me.

XV

I looked on them nine several days,
And then I saw that they were bad;
A friend, too, spoke in their dispraise,—
He never read them;—with amaze
I found Sir William Drummond had.

XVI

When the book came, the Devil sent
It to P. Verbovale[2], Esquire,
With a brief note of compliment,
By that night's Carlisle mail. It went,
And set his soul on fire.

XVII

Fire, which *ex luce praebens fumum*,
Made him beyond the bottom see
Of truth's clear well—when I and you, Ma'am,
Go, as we shall do, *subter humum*,
We may know more than he.

XVIII

Now Peter ran to seed in soul
Into a walking paradox;
For he was neither part nor whole,
Nor good, nor bad—nor knave nor fool;
—Among the woods and rocks

XIX

Furious he rode, where late he ran,
Lashing and spurring his tame hobby;
Turned to a formal puritan,
A solemn and unsexual man,—
He half believed *White Obi*.

XX

This steed in vision he would ride,
High trotting over nine-inch bridges,
With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride,
Mocking and mowing by his side—
A mad-brained goblin for a guide—
Over corn-fields, gates, and hedges.

XXI

After these ghastly rides, he came
Home to his heart, and found from thence
Much stolen of its accustomed flame;
His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame
Of their intelligence.

---

[1] *Vox populi, vox dei.* As Mr. Godwin truly observes of a more famous saying, *of some merit as a popular maxim, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy.*—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] Quasi, *Qui valet verba*:—*i. e.* all the words which have been, are, or may be expended by, for, against, with, or on him. A sufficient proof of the utility of this history. Peter's progenitor who selected this name seems to have possessed *a pure anticipated cognition* of the nature and modesty of this ornament of his posterity.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

XXII

To Peter's view, all seemed one hue;
He was no Whig, he was no Tory;
No Deist and no Christian he;—
He got so subtle, that to be
Nothing, was all his glory.

XXIII

One single point in his belief
From his organization sprung,
The heart-enrooted faith, the chief
Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf,
That 'Happiness is wrong';

XXIV

So thought Calvin and Dominic;
So think their fierce successors, who
Even now would neither stint nor stick
Our flesh from off our bones to pick,
If they might 'do their do.'

XXV

His morals thus were undermined:—
The old Peter—the hard, old Potter—
Was born anew within his mind;
He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined,
As when he tramped beside the Otter[1].

XXVI

In the death hues of agony
Lambently flashing from a fish,
Now Peter felt amused to see
Shades like a rainbow's rise and flee,
Mixed with a certain hungry wish[2].

XXVII

So in his Country's dying face
He looked—and, lovely as she lay,
Seeking in vain his last embrace,
Wailing her own abandoned case,
With hardened sneer he turned away:

XXVIII

And coolly to his own soul said;—
'Do you not think that we might make
A poem on her when she's dead:—
Or, no—a thought is in my head—
Her shroud for a new sheet I'll take:

XXIX

'My wife wants one.—Let who will bury
This mangled corpse! And I and you,
My dearest Soul, will then make merry,
As the Prince Regent did with Sherry,—'
'Ay—and at last desert me too.'

XXX

And so his Soul would not be gay,
But moaned within him; like a fawn
Moaning within a cave, it lay
Wounded and wasting, day by day,
Till all its life of life was gone.

602–3 *See Editor's Note.*

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[1] A famous river in the new Atlantis of the Dynastophylic Pantisocratists.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] See the description of the beautiful colours produced during the agonizing death of a number of trout, in the fourth part of a long poem in blank verse, published within a few years. [*The Excursion*, VIII. ll. 568–71.—ED.] That poem contains curious evidence of the gradual hardening of a strong but circumscribed sensibility, of the perversion of a penetrating but panic-stricken understanding. The author might have derived a lesson which he had probably forgotten from these sweet and sublime verses:—

'This lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she* shows and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.'—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

* Nature.

XXXI

As troubled skies stain waters clear,
The storm in Peter's heart and mind
Now made his verses dark and queer:
They were the ghosts of what they were,
Shaking dim grave-clothes in the wind.

XXXII

For he now raved enormous folly,
Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools, and Graves,
'Twould make George Colman melancholy
To have heard him, like a male Molly,
Chanting those stupid staves.

XXXIII

Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse
On Peter while he wrote for freedom,
So soon as in his song they spy
The folly which soothes tyranny,
Praise him, for those who feed 'em.

XXXIV

'He was a man, too great to scan;—
A planet lost in truth's keen rays:—
His virtue, awful and prodigious;—
He was the most sublime, religious,
Pure-minded Poet of these days.'

XXXV

As soon as he read that, cried Peter,
'Eureka! I have found the way
To make a better thing of metre
Than e'er was made by living creature
Up to this blessèd day.'

XXXVI

Then Peter wrote odes to the Devil;—
In one of which he meekly said:
'May Carnage and Slaughter,
Thy niece and thy daughter,
May Rapine and Famine,
Thy gorge ever cramming,
Glut thee with living and dead!

XXXVII

'May Death and Damnation,
And Consternation,
Flit up from Hell with pure intent!
Slash them at Manchester,
Glasgow, Leeds, and Chester;
Drench all with blood from Avon to Trent.

XXXVIII

'Let thy body-guard yeomen
Hew down babes and women,
And laugh with bold triumph till Heaven be rent!
When Moloch in Jewry
Munched children with fury,
It was thou, Devil, dining with pure intent[1].'

PART THE SEVENTH

DOUBLE DAMNATION

I

The Devil now knew his proper cue.—
Soon as he read the ode, he drove
To his friend Lord MacMurderchouse's,
A man of interest in both houses,
And said:—'For money or for love,

II

'Pray find some cure or sinecure;
To feed from the superfluous taxes
A friend of ours—a poet—fewer
Have fluttered tamer to the lure
Than he.' His lordship stands and racks his

---

[1] It is curious to observe how often extremes meet. Cobbett and Peter use the same language for a different purpose: Peter is indeed a sort of metrical Cobbett. Cobbett is, however, more mischievous than Peter, because he pollutes a holy and now unconquerable cause with the principles of legitimate murder; whilst the other only makes a bad one ridiculous and odious.

If either Peter or Cobbett should see this note, each will feel more indignation at being compared to the other than at any censure implied in the moral perversion laid to their charge.—[Shelley's Note.]

III

Stupid brains, while one might count
As many beads as he had boroughs,—
At length replies; from his mean front,
Like one who rubs out an account,
Smoothing away the unmeaning furrows:

IV

'It happens fortunately, dear Sir,
I can. I hope I need require
No pledge from you, that he will stir
In our affairs;—like Oliver,
That he'll be worthy of his hire.'

V

These words exchanged, the news sent off
To Peter, home the Devil hied,—
Took to his bed; he had no cough,
No doctor,—meat and drink enough,—
Yet that same night he died.

VI

The Devil's corpse was leaded down;
His decent heirs enjoyed his pelf,
Mourning-coaches, many a one,
Followed his hearse along the town:—
Where was the Devil himself?

VII

When Peter heard of his promotion,
His eyes grew like two stars for bliss:
There was a bow of sleek devotion
Engendering in his back; each motion
Seemed a Lord's shoe to kiss.

VIII

He hired a house, bought plate, and made
A genteel drive up to his door,
With sifted gravel neatly laid,—
As if defying all who said,
Peter was ever poor.

IX

But a disease soon struck into
The very life and soul of Peter—
He walked about—slept—had the hue
Of health upon his cheeks—and few
Dug better—none a heartier eater.

X

And yet a strange and horrid curse
Clung upon Peter, night and day;
Month after month the thing grew worse,
And deadlier than in this my verse
I can find strength to say.

XI

Peter was dull—he was at first
Dull—oh, so dull—so very dull!
Whether he talked, wrote, or rehearsed—
Still with this dulness was he cursed—
Dull—beyond all conception—dull.

XII

No one could read his books—no mortal,
But a few natural friends, would hear him;
The parson came not near his portal;
His state was like that of the immortal
Described by Swift—no man could bear him.

XIII

His sister, wife, and children yawned,
With a long, slow, and drear ennui,
All human patience far beyond;
Their hopes of Heaven each would have pawned,
Anywhere else to be.

XIV

But in his verse, and in his prose,
The essence of his dulness was
Concentred and compressed so close,
'Twould have made Guatimozin doze
On his red gridiron of brass.

XV

A printer's boy, folding those pages,
Fell slumbrously upon one side;
Like those famed Seven who slept three ages.
To wakeful frenzy's vigil-rages,
As opiates, were the same applied.

XVI

Even the Reviewers who were hired
To do the work of his reviewing,
With adamantine nerves, grew tired;—
Gaping and torpid they retired,
To dream of what they should be doing.

XVII

And worse and worse, the drowsy curse
Yawned in him, till it grew a pest—
A wide contagious atmosphere,
Creeping like cold through all things near;
A power to infect and to infest.

XVIII

His servant-maids and dogs grew dull;
His kitten, late a sportive elf;
The woods and lakes, so beautiful,
Of dim stupidity were full.
All grew dull as Peter's self.

XIX

The earth under his feet—the springs,
Which lived within it a quick life,
The air, the winds of many wings,
That fan it with new murmurings,
Were dead to their harmonious strife.

XX

The birds and beasts within the wood,
The insects, and each creeping thing,
Were now a silent multitude;
Love's work was left unwrought—no brood
Near Peter's house took wing.

XXI

And every neighbouring cottager
Stupidly yawned upon the other:
No jackass brayed; no little cur
Cocked up his ears;—no man would stir
To save a dying mother.

XXII

Yet all from that charmed district went
But some half-idiot and half-knave,
Who rather than pay any rent,
Would live with marvellous content,
Over his father's grave.

XXIII

No bailiff dared within that space,
For fear of the dull charm, to enter;
A man would bear upon his face,
For fifteen months in any case,
The yawn of such a venture.

XXIV

Seven miles above—below—around—
This pest of dulness holds its sway;
A ghastly life without a sound;
To Peter's soul the spell is bound—
How should it ever pass away?

NOTE ON PETER BELL THE THIRD, BY MRS. SHELLEY

In this new edition I have added *Peter Bell the Third.* A critique on Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly, and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the author of *Peter Bell* is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more;—he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet—a man of lofty and creative genius—quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind, but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted, even as transcendently as the author of *Peter Bell*, with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written as a warning—not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth, or with Coleridge (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem), and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal;—it contains something of criticism on the compositions of those great poets, but nothing injurious to the men themselves.

No poem contains more of Shelley's peculiar views with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written: and, though, like the burlesque drama of *Swellfoot*, it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry—so much of *himself* in it—that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE

[Composed during Shelley's occupation of the Gisbornes' house at Leghorn, July, 1820; published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Sources of the text are (1) a draft in Shelley's hand, 'partly illegible' (Forman), amongst the Boscombe MSS.; (2) a transcript by Mrs. Shelley; (3) the *editio princeps*, 1824; the text in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st and 2nd edd. Our text is that of Mrs. Shelley's transcript, modified by the Boscombe MS. Here, as elsewhere in this edition, the readings of the *editio princeps* are preserved in the footnotes.]

LEGHORN, *July* 1, 1820.

THE spider spreads her webs, whether she be
In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree;
The silk-worm in the dark green mulberry leaves
His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves;
So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,
Sit spinning still round this decaying form,
From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—
No net of words in garish colours wrought
To catch the idle buzzers of the day—
But a soft cell, where when that fades away,
Memory may clothe in wings my living name
And feed it with the asphodels of fame,
Which in those hearts which must remember me
Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist,
Would think I were a mighty mechanist,
Bent with sublime Archimedean art
To breathe a soul into the iron heart

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13 must *Bos. MS.*; most *ed. 1824.*

Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,
Which by the force of figured spells might win
Its way over the sea, and sport therein;
For round the walls are hung dread engines, such
As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch
Ixion or the Titan:—or the quick
Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic,
To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic,
Or those in philanthropic council met,
Who thought to pay some interest for the debt
They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation,
By giving a faint foretaste of damnation
To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, and the rest
Who made our land an island of the blest,
When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire
On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire:—
With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag,
Which fishers found under the utmost crag
Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles,
Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles
Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn
When the exulting elements in scorn,
Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,
As panthers sleep;—and other strange and dread
Magical forms the brick floor overspread,—
Proteus transformed to metal did not make
More figures, or more strange; nor did he take
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,
Or heap himself in such a horrid mass
Of tin and iron not to be understood;
And forms of unimaginable wood,
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood:
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and groovèd blocks,
The elements of what will stand the shocks
Of wave and wind and time.—Upon the table
More knacks and quips there be than I am able
To catalogize in this verse of mine:—
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,
But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink
When at their subterranean toil they swink,
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who
Reply to them in lava—cry halloo!
And call out to the cities o'er their head,—
Roofs, towers, and shrines, the dying and the dead,
Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all quaff
Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh.

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27 philanthropic *Bos. MS.*; philosophic *ed. 1824.* 29 *so 1839, 2nd ed.*; They owed ..... *ed. 1824.* 36 Which fishers *Bos. MS.*; Which fishes *ed. 1824*; With fishes *edd. 1839.* 38 rarely *transcript*; seldom *edd. 1824, 1839.* 61 lava—cry] lava-cry *edd. 1824, 1839.* 63 towers *transcript*; towns *edd. 1824, 1839.*

This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within
The walnut bowl it lies, veinèd and thin,
In colour like the wake of light that stains
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains
The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze
Is still—blue Heaven smiles over the pale seas.
And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I
Yield to the impulse of an infancy
Outlasting manhood—I have made to float
A rude idealism of a paper boat:—
A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know
The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so
He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next
Lie bills and calculations much perplexed,
With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint
Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.
Then comes a range of mathematical
Instruments, for plans nautical and statical;
A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass
With ink in it;—a china cup that was
What it will never be again, I think,—
A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink
The liquor doctors rail at—and which I
Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die
We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea,
And cry out,—'Heads or tails?' where'er we be.
Near that a dusty paint-box, some odd hooks,
A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,
Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,
To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims,
Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray
Of figures,—disentangle them who may.
Baron de Tott's Memoirs beside them lie,
And some odd volumes of old chemistry.
Near those a most inexplicable thing,
With lead in the middle—I'm conjecturing
How to make Henry understand; but no—
I'll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,
This secret in the pregnant womb of time,
Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme.

  And here like some weird Archimage sit I,
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,
The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind
Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind
The gentle spirit of our meek reviews
Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,

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84 queer *Bos. MS.*; green *transcript, edd. 1824, 1839.* 92 odd hooks *transcript*; old books *edd. 1839* (an evident misprint); old hooks *ed. 1824.* 93 A] An *ed. 1824.* 100 those *transcript*; them *edd. 1824, 1839.* 101 lead *Bos. MS.*; least *transcript, edd. 1824, 1839.*

Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;—
I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent,
But not for them—Libeccio rushes round
With an inconstant and an idle sound,
I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke
Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak
Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;
The ripe corn under the undulating air
Undulates like an ocean;—and the vines
Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines—
The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill
The empty pauses of the blast;—the hill
Looks hoary through the white electric rain,
And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain,
The interrupted thunder howls; above
One chasm of Heaven smiles, like the eye of Love
On the unquiet world;—while such things are,
How could one worth your friendship heed the war
Of worms? the shriek of the world's carrion jays,
Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise?

You are not here! the quaint witch Memory sees,
In vacant chairs, your absent images,
And points where once you sat, and now should be
But are not.—I demand if ever we
Shall meet as then we met;—and she replies,
Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes;
'I know the past alone—but summon home
My sister Hope,—she speaks of all to come.'
But I, an old diviner, who knew well
Every false verse of that sweet oracle,
Turned to the sad enchantress once again,
And sought a respite from my gentle pain,
In citing every passage o'er and o'er
Of our communion—how on the sea-shore
We watched the ocean and the sky together,
Under the roof of blue Italian weather;
How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm,
And felt the transverse lightning linger warm
Upon my cheek—and how we often made
Feasts for each other, where good will outweighed
The frugal luxury of our country cheer,
As well it might, were it less firm and clear
Than ours must ever be;—and how we spun
A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun
Of this familiar life, which seems to be
But is not:—or is but quaint mockery

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127 eye *Bos. MS.*, *transcript*, *edd. 1839*; age *ed. 1824.* 140 knew *Bos. MS.*; know *transcript*, *edd. 1824, 1839.* 144 citing *Bos. MS.*; acting *transcript*, *edd. 1824, 1839.* 151 Feasts *transcript*; Treats *edd. 1824, 1839.* 153 As well it] As it well *edd. 1824, 1839.*

Of all we would believe, and sadly blame
The jarring and inexplicable frame
Of this wrong world:—and then anatomize
The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes
Were closed in distant years;—or widely guess
The issue of the earth's great business,
When we shall be as we no longer are—
Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war
Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not;—or how
You listened to some interrupted flow
Of visionary rhyme,—in joy and pain
Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,
With little skill perhaps;—or how we sought
Those deepest wells of passion or of thought
Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,
Staining their sacred waters with our tears;
Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed!
Or how I, wisest lady! then endued
The language of a land which now is free,
And, winged with thoughts of truth and majesty,
Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,
And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,
'My name is Legion!'—that majestic tongue
Which Calderon over the desert flung
Of ages and of nations; and which found
An echo in our hearts, and with the sound
Startled oblivion;—thou wert then to me
As is a nurse—when inarticulately
A child would talk as its grown parents do.
If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,
If hawks chase doves through the aethereal way,
Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,
Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast
Out of the forest of the pathless past
These recollected pleasures?
You are now
In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow
At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.
Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see
That which was Godwin,—greater none than he
Though fallen—and fallen on evil times—to stand
Among the spirits of our age and land,
Before the dread tribunal of *to come*
The foremost,—while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb.
You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure
In the exceeding lustre and the pure

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158 believe, and] believe; or *edd. 1824, 1839.* 173 their *transcript*; the *edd. 1824, 1839.* 188 aethereal *transcript*; aĕreal *edd. 1824, 1839.* 197–201 *See notes at end.* 202 Coleridge] C—— *ed. 1824. So too* H——t *l.* 209; H—— *l.* 226; P—— *l.* 233; H.S. *l.* 250; H —— —— and —— *l.* 296.

Intense irradiation of a mind,
Which, with its own internal lightning blind,
Flags wearily through darkness and despair—
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—
You will see Hunt—one of those happy souls
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
This world would smell like what it is—a tomb;
Who is, what others seem; his room no doubt
Is still adorned with many a cast from Shout,
With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;
And coronals of bay from ribbons hung,
And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung;
The gifts of the most learned among some dozens
Of female friends, sisters-in-law, and cousins.
And there is he with his eternal puns,
Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns
Thundering for money at a poet's door;
Alas! it is no use to say, 'I'm poor!'
Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
Things wiser than were ever read in book,
Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.—
You will see Hogg,—and I cannot express
His virtues,—though I know that they are great,
Because he locks, then barricades the gate
Within which they inhabit;—of his wit
And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit.
He is a pearl within an oyster shell,
One of the richest of the deep;—and there
Is English Peacock, with his mountain Fair,
Turned into a Flamingo;—that shy bird
That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard
When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
His best friends hear no more of him?—but you
Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,
With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope
Matched with this cameleopard—his fine wit
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it;
A strain too learnèd for a shallow age,
Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page,
Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,
Fold itself up for the serener clime
Of years to come, and find its recompense
In that just expectation.—Wit and sense,
Virtue and human knowledge; all that might
Make this dull world a business of delight,

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205 lightning *Bos. MS.*, *transcript*; lustre *edd. 1824, 1839.* 224 read *Bos. MS.*; said *transcript*, *edd. 1824, 1839.* 244 time *Bos. MS.*, *transcript*; age *edd. 1824, 1839.* 245 the *transcript*; a *edd. 1824, 1839.*

Are all combined in Horace Smith.—And these,
With some exceptions, which I need not tease
Your patience by descanting on,—are all
You and I know in London.
                                        I recall
My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night.
As water does a sponge, so the moonlight
Fills the void, hollow, universal air—
What see you?—unpavilioned Heaven is fair,
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep;
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
Piloted by the many-wandering blast,
And the rare stars rush through them dim and fast:—
All this is beautiful in every land.—
But what see you beside?—a shabby stand
Of Hackney coaches—a brick house or wall
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl
Of our unhappy politics;—or worse—
A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse
Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade,
You must accept in place of serenade—
Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring
To Henry, some unutterable thing.
I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit
Built round dark caverns, even to the root
Of the living stems that feed them—in whose bowers
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;
Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn
Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne
In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance,
Like wingèd stars the fire-flies flash and glance,
Pale in the open moonshine, but each one
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,
A meteor tamed; a fixed star gone astray
From the silver regions of the milky way;—
Afar the Contadino's song is heard,
Rude, but made sweet by distance—and a bird
Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet
I know none else that sings so sweet as it
At this late hour;—and then all is still—
Now—Italy or London, which you will!

Next winter you must pass with me; I'll have
My house by that time turned into a grave
Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,

272, 273 *found in the 2nd ed. of P. W., 1839*; *wanting in transcript, ed. 1824 and 1839, 1st. ed.* 276 that *transcript*; who *edd. 1824, 1839.* 288 the *transcript*; a *edd. 1824, 1839.*

And all the dreams which our tormentors are;
Oh! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were there,
With everything belonging to them fair!—
We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek;
And ask one week to make another week
As like his father, as I'm unlike mine,
Which is not his fault, as you may divine.
Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,
Yet let's be merry: we'll have tea and toast;
Custards for supper, and an endless host
Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies,
And other such lady-like luxuries,—
Feasting on which we will philosophize!
And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,
To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.
And then we'll talk;—what shall we talk about?
Oh! there are themes enough for many a bout
Of thought-entangled descant;—as to nerves—
With cones and parallelograms and curves
I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare
To bother me—when you are with me there.
And they shall never more sip laudanum,
From Helicon or Himeros[1];—well, come,
And in despite of God and of the devil,
We'll make our friendly philosophic revel
Outlast the leafless time; till buds and flowers
Warn the obscure inevitable hours,
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew;—
'To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.'

THE WITCH OF ATLAS

[Composed at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 14–16, 1820; published in *Posthumous Poems*, ed. Mrs. Shelley, 1824. The dedication *To Mary* first appeared in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Sources of the text are (1) the *editio princeps*, 1824; (2) edd. 1839 (which agree, and, save in two instances, follow ed. 1824); (3) an early and incomplete MS. in Shelley's handwriting (now at the Bodleian, here, as throughout, cited as *B.*), carefully collated by Mr. C. D. Locock, who printed the results in his *Examination of the Shelley MSS.*, etc., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903; (4) a later, yet intermediate, transcript by Mrs. Shelley, the variations of which are noted by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. The original text is modified in many places by variants from the MSS., but the readings of ed. 1824 are, in every instance, given in the footnotes.]

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296 *See notes at end.* 299, 300 *So 1839, 2nd ed.*; *wanting in edd. 1824, 1839, 1st.* 301 *So transcript*; *wanting in edd. 1824, 1839.* 317 well, come *1839, 2nd ed.*; we'll come *edd. 1824, 1839, 1st.* 318 despite of God] *transcript*; despite of . . . *ed. 1824*; spite of . . . *edd. 1839.*

[1] Ἵμερος, from which the river Himera was named, is, with some slight shade of difference, a synonym of Love.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

TO MARY

(ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM, UPON THE SCORE OF ITS CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST)

I

How, my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten
  (For vipers kill, though dead) by some review,
That you condemn these verses I have written,
  Because they tell no story, false or true?
What, though no mice are caught by a young kitten,
  May it not leap and play as grown cats do,
Till its claws come? Prithee, for this one time,
Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

II

What hand would crush the silken-wingèd fly,
  The youngest of inconstant April's minions,
Because it cannot climb the purest sky,
  Where the swan sings, amid the sun's dominions?
Not thine. Thou knowest 'tis its doom to die,
  When Day shall hide within her twilight pinions
The lucent eyes, and the eternal smile,
Serene as thine, which lent it life awhile.

III

To thy fair feet a wingèd Vision came,
  Whose date should have been longer than a day,
And o'er thy head did beat its wings for fame,
  And in thy sight its fading plumes display;
The watery bow burned in the evening flame.
  But the shower fell, the swift Sun went his way—
And that is dead.—O, let me not believe
That anything of mine is fit to live!

IV

Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years
  Considering and retouching Peter Bell;
Watering his laurels with the killing tears
  Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to Hell
Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the spheres
  Of Heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers; this well
May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil
The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.

V

My Witch indeed is not so sweet a creature
  As Ruth or Lucy, whom his graceful praise
Clothes for our grandsons—but she matches Peter,
  Though he took nineteen years, and she three days
In dressing. Light the vest of flowing metre
  She wears; he, proud as dandy with his stays,
Has hung upon his wiry limbs a dress
Like King Lear's 'looped and windowed raggedness.'

VI

If you strip Peter, you will see a fellow
Scorched by Hell's hyperequatorial climate
Into a kind of a sulphureous yellow:
A lean mark, hardly fit to fling a rhyme at;
In shape a Scaramouch, in hue Othello.
If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate
Can shrive you of that sin,—if sin there be
In love, when it becomes idolatry.

THE WITCH OF ATLAS

I

Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth
Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,
Error and Truth, had hunted from the Earth
All those bright natures which adorned its prime,
And left us nothing to believe in, worth
The pains of putting into learnèd rhyme,
A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain
Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.

II

Her mother was one of the Atlantides:
The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden
In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas
So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden
In the warm shadow of her loveliness;—
He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden
The chamber of gray rock in which she lay—
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

III

'Tis said, she first was changed into a vapour,
And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,
Like splendour-wingèd moths about a taper,
Round the red west when the sun dies in it:
And then into a meteor, such as caper
On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit:
Then, into one of those mysterious stars
Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

IV

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent
Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden
With that bright sign the billows to indent
The sea-deserted sand—like children chidden,
At her command they ever came and went—
Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden
Took shape and motion: with the living form
Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.

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65 first was *transcript, B* ; was first *ed. 1824*.

V

A lovely lady garmented in light
From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are
Two openings of unfathomable night
Seen through a Temple's cloven roof—her hair
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,
Picturing her form; her soft smiles shone afar,
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew
All living things towards this wonder new.

VI

And first the spotted cameleopard came,
And then the wise and fearless elephant;
Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame
Of his own volumes intervolved;—all gaunt
And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.
They drank before her at her sacred fount;
And every beast of beating heart grew bold,
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

VII

The brinded lioness led forth her young,
That she might teach them how they should forego
Their inborn thirst of death; the pard unstrung
His sinews at her feet, and sought to know
With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue
How he might be as gentle as the doe.
The magic circle of her voice and eyes
All savage natures did imparadise.

VIII

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick
Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew
Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick
Cicadae are, drunk with the noonday dew:
And Dryope and Faunus followed quick,
Teasing the God to sing them something new;
Till in this cave they found the lady lone,
Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

IX

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,
And though none saw him,—through the adamant
Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air,
And through those living spirits, like a want,
He passed out of his everlasting lair
Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,
And felt that wondrous lady all alone,—
And she felt him, upon her emerald throne.

84 Temple's *transcript, B.*; tempest's *ed. 1824.*

X

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,
And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,
Who drives her white waves over the green sea,
And Ocean with the brine on his gray locks,
And quaint Priapus with his company,
All came, much wondering how the enwombèd rocks
Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth;—
Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

XI

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,
And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant—
Their spirits shook within them, as a flame
Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt:
Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,
Centaurs, and Satyrs, and such shapes as haunt
Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead,
Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

XII

For she was beautiful—her beauty made
The bright world dim, and everything beside
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:
No thought of living spirit could abide,
Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,
On any object in the world so wide,
On any hope within the circling skies,
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

XIII

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle
And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three
Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle
The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she
As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle
In the belated moon, wound skilfully;
And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—
A shadow for the splendour of her love.

XIV

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling
Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,
Folded in cells of crystal silence there;
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
Will never die—yet ere we are aware,
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,
And the regret they leave remains alone.

XV

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,
Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis,
Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint
With the soft burthen of intensest bliss.
It was its work to bear to many a saint
Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,
Even Love's:—and others white, green, gray, and black,
And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

XVI

And odours in a kind of aviary
Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept,
Clipped in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy
Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept;
As bats at the wired window of a dairy,
They beat their vans; and each was an adept,
When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds,
To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

XVII

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might
Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,
And change eternal death into a night
Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep,
Could make their tears all wonder and delight,
She in her crystal vials did closely keep:
If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said
The living were not envied of the dead.

XVIII

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,
The works of some Saturnian Archimage,
Which taught the expiations at whose price
Men from the Gods might win that happy age
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;
And which might quench the Earth-consuming rage
Of gold and blood—till men should live and move
Harmonious as the sacred stars above;

XIX

And how all things that seem untameable,
Not to be checked and not to be confined,
Obey the spells of Wisdom's wizard skill;
Time, earth, and fire—the ocean and the wind,
And all their shapes—and man's imperial will;
And other scrolls whose writings did unbind
The inmost lore of Love—let the profane
Tremble to ask what secrets they contain.

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165 was its *transcript*, *B*; is its *ed. 1824*. 184 envied *so all MSS. and edd.*; envious *cj. James Thomson* ('*B. V.*').

XX

And wondrous works of substances unknown,
  To which the enchantment of her father's power
Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,
  Were heaped in the recesses of her bower;
Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone
  In their own golden beams—each like a flower,
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light
Under a cypress in a starless night.

XXI

At first she lived alone in this wild home,
  And her own thoughts were each a minister,
Clothing themselves, or with the ocean foam,
  Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,
To work whatever purposes might come
  Into her mind; such power her mighty Sire
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

XXII

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,
  Oreads and Naiads, with long weedy locks,
Offered to do her bidding through the seas,
  Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,
  And in the gnarlèd heart of stubborn oaks,
So they might live for ever in the light
Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

XXIII

'This may not be,' the wizard maid replied;
  'The fountains where the Naiades bedew
Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried;
  The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide;
  The boundless ocean like a drop of dew
Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

XXIV

'And ye with them will perish, one by one;—
  If I must sigh to think that this shall be,
If I must weep when the surviving Sun
  Shall smile on your decay—oh, ask not me
To love you till your little race is run;
  I cannot die as ye must—over me
Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so—farewell!'—

XXV

She spoke and wept:—the dark and azure well
  Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,
And every little circlet where they fell
  Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres
And intertangled lines of light:—a knell
  Of sobbing voices came upon her ears
From those departing Forms, o'er the serene
Of the white streams and of the forest green.

XXVI

All day the wizard lady sate aloof,
  Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity,
Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof;
  Or broidering the pictured poesy
Of some high tale upon her growing woof,
  Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye
In hues outshining heaven—and ever she
Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

XXVII

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece
  Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon;
Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is—
  Each flame of it is as a precious stone
Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this
  Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.
The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand
She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

XXVIII

This lady never slept, but lay in trance
  All night within the fountain—as in sleep.
Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance;
  Through the green splendour of the water deep
She saw the constellations reel and dance
  Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep
The tenour of her contemplations calm,
With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

XXIX

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended
  From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,
She passed at dewfall to a space extended,
  Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel
Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,
  There yawned an inextinguishable well
Of crimson fire—full even to the brim,
And overflowing all the margin trim.

262 upon *so all MSS. and edd.*; thereon *cj. Rossetti.*

XXX

Within the which she lay when the fierce war
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor
In many a mimic moon and bearded star
O'er woods and lawns;—the serpent heard it flicker
In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar—
And when the windless snow descended thicker
Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

XXXI

She had a boat, which some say Vulcan wrought
For Venus, as the chariot of her star;
But it was found too feeble to be fraught
With all the ardours in that sphere which are,
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought
And gave it to this daughter: from a car
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

XXXII

And others say, that, when but three hours old,
The first-born Love out of his cradle lept,
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,
And like a horticultural adept,
Stole a strange seed, and wrapped it up in mould,
And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

XXXIII

The plant grew strong and green, the snowy flower
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began
To turn the light and dew by inward power
To its own substance; woven tracery ran
Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er
The solid rind, like a leaf's veinèd fan—
Of which Love scooped this boat—and with soft motion
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

XXXIV

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit
A living spirit within all its frame,
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it.
Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit—
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame—
Or on blind Homer's heart a wingèd thought,—
In joyous expectation lay the boat.

XXXV

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow
Together, tempering the repugnant mass
With liquid love—all things together grow
Through which the harmony of love can pass;

And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow—
A living Image, which did far surpass
In beauty that bright shape of vital stone
Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

XXXVI

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth
It seemed to have developed no defect
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—
In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked;
The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth,
The countenance was such as might select
Some artist that his skill should never die,
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

XXXVII

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,
Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,
Tipped with the speed of liquid lightenings,
Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere:
She led her creature to the boiling springs
Where the light boat was moored, and said: 'Sit here!'
And pointed to the prow, and took her seat
Beside the rudder, with opposing feet.

XXXVIII

And down the streams which clove those mountains vast,
Around their inland islets, and amid
The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast
Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid
In melancholy gloom, the pinnace passed;
By many a star-surrounded pyramid
Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,
And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

XXXIX

The silver noon into that winding dell,
With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,
Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell;
A green and glowing light, like that which drops
From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,
When Earth over her face Night's mantle wraps;
Between the severed mountains lay on high,
Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky.

XL

And ever as she went, the Image lay
With folded wings and unawakened eyes;
And o'er its gentle countenance did play
The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,

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333 swelled lightly *ed. 1824, B.*; lightly swelled *edd. 1839*; swelling lightly with its full growth *transcript.* 339 lightenings *B., edd. 1839*; lightnings *ed. 1824, transcript.*

Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay,
And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs
Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,
They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

XLI

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud
Upon a stream of wind, the pinnace went:
Now lingering on the pools, in which abode
The calm and darkness of the deep content
In which they paused; now o'er the shallow road
Of white and dancing waters, all besprent
With sand and polished pebbles:—mortal boat
In such a shallow rapid could not float.

XLII

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver
Their snow-like waters into golden air,
Or under chasms unfathomable ever
Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear
A subterranean portal for the river,
It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear
Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray,
Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

XLIII

And when the wizard lady would ascend
The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,
Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—
She called 'Hermaphroditus!'—and the pale
And heavy hue which slumber could extend
Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale
A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,
Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

XLIV

And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,
With stars of fire spotting the stream below;
And from above into the Sun's dominions
Flinging a glory, like the golden glow
In which Spring clothes her emerald-wingèd minions,
All interwoven with fine feathery snow
And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,
With which frost paints the pines in winter time.

XLV

And then it winnowed the Elysian air
Which ever hung about that lady bright,
With its aethereal vans—and speeding there,
Like a star up the torrent of the night,

Or a swift eagle in the morning glare
  Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight,
The pinnace, oared by those enchanted wings,
Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

XLVI

The water flashed, like sunlight by the prow
  Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven;
The still air seemed as if its waves did flow
  In tempest down the mountains; loosely driven
The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro:
  Beneath, the billows having vainly striven
Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel
The swift and steady motion of the keel.

XLVII

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,
  Or in the noon of interlunar night,
The lady-witch in visions could not chain
  Her spirit; but sailed forth under the light
Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain
  Its storm-outspeeding wings, the Hermaphrodite;
She to the Austral waters took her way,
Beyond the fabulous Thamondocana,—

XLVIII

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,
  Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,
With the Antarctic constellations paven.
  Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake—
There she would build herself a windless haven
  Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make
The bastions of the storm, when through the sky
The spirits of the tempest thundered by:

XLIX

A haven beneath whose translucent floor
  The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,
And around which the solid vapours hoar,
  Based on the level waters, to the sky
Lifted their dreadful crags, and like a shore
  Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly
Hemmed in with rifts and precipices gray,
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.

L

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash
  Of the wind's scourge, foamed like a wounded thing,
And the incessant hail with stony clash
  Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing

422 Its *transcript*; His *ed. 1824, B.* 424 Thamondocana *transcript, B.*; Thamondocona *ed. 1824.* 442 wind's *transcript, B.*; winds' *ed. 1834.*

Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash
  Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering
Fragment of inky thunder-smoke—this haven
Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,—

LI

On which that lady played her many pranks,
  Circling the image of a shooting star,
Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks
  Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,
In her light boat; and many quips and cranks
  She played upon the water, till the car
Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan,
To journey from the misty east began.

LII

And then she called out of the hollow turrets
  Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermilion,
The armies of her ministering spirits—
  In mighty legions, million after million,
They came, each troop emblazoning its merits
  On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion
Of the intertexture of the atmosphere
They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

LIII

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen
  Of woven exhalations, underlaid
With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen
  A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid
With crimson silk—cressets from the serene
  Hung there, and on the water for her tread
A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,
Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

LIV

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught
  Upon those wandering isles of aëry dew,
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,
  She sate, and heard all that had happened new
Between the earth and moon, since they had brought
  The last intelligence—and now she grew
Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—
And now she wept, and now she laughed outright.

LV

These were tame pleasures; she would often climb
  The steepest ladder of the crudded rack
Up to some beakèd cape of cloud sublime,
  And like Arion on the dolphin's back
Ride singing through the shoreless air;—oft-time
  Following the serpent lightning's winding track,
She ran upon the platforms of the wind,
And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

LVI

And sometimes to those streams of upper air
Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round,
She would ascend, and win the spirits there
To let her join their chorus. Mortals found
That on those days the sky was calm and fair,
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound
Wandered upon the earth where'er she passed,
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

LVII

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,
To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads
Egypt and Aethiopia, from the steep
Of utmost Axumè, until he spreads,
Like a calm flock of silver-fleecèd sheep,
His waters on the plain: and crested heads
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

LVIII

By Moeris and the Mareotid lakes,
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes
Of those huge forms—within the brazen doors
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

LIX

And where within the surface of the river
The shadows of the massy temples lie,
And never are erased—but tremble ever
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever
The works of man pierced that serenest sky
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight
To wander in the shadow of the night.

LX

With motion like the spirit of that wind
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet
Passed through the peopled haunts of humankind,
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,
Through fane, and palace-court, and labyrinth mined
With many a dark and subterranean street
Under the Nile, through chambers high and deep
She passed, observing mortals in their sleep.

498 where *transcript, B.*; when *ed. 1824.*

LXI

A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep.
Here lay two sister twins in infancy;
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;
Within, two lovers linkèd innocently
In their loose locks which over both did creep
Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

LXII

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,
Not to be mirrored in a holy song—
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong;
And all the code of Custom's lawless law
Written upon the brows of old and young:
'This,' said the wizard maiden, 'is the strife
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life.'

LXIII

And little did the sight disturb her soul.—
We, the weak mariners of that wide lake
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,
Our course unpiloted and starless make
O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal:—
But she in the calm depths her way could take,
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

LXIV

And she saw princes couched under the glow
Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court
In dormitories ranged, row after row,
She saw the priests asleep—all of one sort—
For all were educated to be so.—
The peasants in their huts, and in the port
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,
And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves.

LXV

And all the forms in which those spirits lay
Were to her sight like the diaphanous
Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array
Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us
Only their scorn of all concealment: they
Move in the light of their own beauty thus.
But these and all now lay with sleep upon them,
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

LXVI

She, all those human figures breathing there,
  Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,
  And often through a rude and worn disguise
She saw the inner form most bright and fair—
  And then she had a charm of strange device,
Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone,
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

LXVII

Alas! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given
  For such a charm when Tithon became gray?
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven
  Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina
Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven
  Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,
To any witch who would have taught you it?
The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

LXVIII

'Tis said in after times her spirit free
  Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—
But holy Dian could not chaster be
  Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,
Than now this lady—like a sexless bee
  Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none,
Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden
Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

LXIX

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave
  Strange panacea in a crystal bowl:—
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave,
  And lived thenceforward as if some control,
Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave
  Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,
Was as a green and overarching bower
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

LXX

For on the night when they were buried, she
  Restored the embalmers' ruining, and shook
The light out of the funeral lamps, to be
  A mimic day within that deathy nook;
And she unwound the woven imagery
  Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took
The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,
And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

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596 thenceforward *B.*; thence forth *ed. 1824*; henceforward *transcript*.
599 Was as a *B.*; Was a *ed. 1824*.
601 night when *transcript*; night that *ed. 1824, B.*

LXXI

And there the body lay, age after age,
Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying,
Like one asleep in a green hermitage,
With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing,
And living in its dreams beyond the rage
Of death or life; while they were still arraying
In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind
And fleeting generations of mankind.

LXXII

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain
Of those who were less beautiful, and make
All harsh and crooked purposes more vain
Than in the desert is the serpent's wake
Which the sand covers—all his evil gain
The miser in such dreams would rise and shake
Into a beggar's lap;—the lying scribe
Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

LXXIII

The priests would write an explanation full,
Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,
How the God Apis really was a bull,
And nothing more; and bid the herald stick
The same against the temple doors, and pull
The old cant down; they licensed all to speak
Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese,
By pastoral letters to each diocese.

LXXIV

The king would dress an ape up in his crown
And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,
And on the right hand of the sunlike throne
Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat
The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one
Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet
Of their great Emperor, when the morning came,
And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same!

LXXV

The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and
Walked out of quarters in somnambulism;
Round the red anvils you might see them stand
Like Cyclopses in Vulcan's sooty abysm,
Beating their swords to ploughshares;—in a band
The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism
Free through the streets of Memphis, much, I wis,
To the annoyance of king Amasis.

612 smiles *transcript, B.*; sleep *ed. 1824.*

LXXVI

And timid lovers who had been so coy,
They hardly knew whether they loved or not,
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;
And when next day the maiden and the boy
Met one another, both, like sinners caught,
Blushed at the thing which each believed was done
Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

LXXVII

And then the Witch would let them take no ill:
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find,
The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind.
Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,
Were torn apart—a wide wound, mind from mind!—
She did unite again with visions clear
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

LXXVIII

These were the pranks she played among the cities
Of mortal men, and what she did to Sprites
And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties
To do her will, and show their subtle sleights,
I will declare another time; for it is
A tale more fit for the weird winter nights
Than for these garish summer days, when we
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

NOTE ON THE WITCH OF ATLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

We spent the summer of 1820 at the Baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighbourhood. The country around is fertile, and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome intelligent race; and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pellegrino—a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days of the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted; though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea, and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, the *Witch of Atlas*. This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes—wildly fanciful, full of brilliant imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

The surpassing excellence of *The Cenci* had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of the *Witch of Atlas*. It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavours. The few stanzas that precede the poem were addressed to me on my representing these ideas to him. Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardour that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources, and on the inspiration of his own soul; and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many; but I felt sure that, if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be acknowledged, and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues, which in those days it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. That he felt these things deeply cannot be doubted, though he armed himself with the consciousness of acting from a lofty and heroic sense of right. The truth burst from his heart sometimes in solitude, and he would write a few unfinished verses that showed that he felt the sting; among such I find the following:—

‘Alas! this is not what I thought Life was.
I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass
Untouched by suffering through the ruggèd glen.
In mine own heart I saw as in a glass
The hearts of others. . . . And, when
I went among my kind, with triple brass
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,
To bear scorn, fear, and hate—a woful mass!’

I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched. But my persuasions were vain, the mind could not be bent from its natural inclination. Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart; and he loved to shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy, forgetting love and hate, and regret and lost hope, in such imaginations as borrowed their hues from sunrise or sunset, from the yellow moonshine or paly twilight, from the aspect of the far ocean or the shadows of the woods, —which celebrated the singing of the winds among the pines, the flow of a murmuring stream, and the thousand harmonious sounds which Nature creates in her solitudes. These are the materials which form the *Witch of Atlas*: it is a brilliant congregation of ideas such as his senses gathered, and his fancy coloured, during his rambles in the sunny land he so much loved.

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS

OR

SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT

A TRAGEDY IN TWO ACTS

Translated from the Original Doric

'Choose Reform or Civil War,
When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A Consort-Queen shall hunt a King with hogs,
Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

[Begun at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 24, 1819; published anonymously by J. Johnston, Cheapside (imprint C. F. Seyfang), 1820. On a threat of prosecution the publisher surrendered the whole impression, seven copies—the total number sold—excepted. *Oedipus* does not appear in the first edition of the *Poetical Works*, 1839, but it was included by Mrs. Shelley in the second edition of that year. Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1820, save in three places, where the reading of ed. 1820 will be found at the foot of the page.]

ADVERTISEMENT

This Tragedy is one of a triad, or system of three Plays (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their dramatic representations), elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the Swellfoot dynasty. It was evidently written by some *learned Theban*, and, from its characteristic dulness, apparently before the duties on the importation of *Attic salt* had been repealed by the Boeotarchs. The tenderness with which he treats the pigs proves him to have been a *sus Boeotiae;* possibly *Epicuri de grege porcus*; for, as the poet observes,

> 'A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.'

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity, except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous Chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last Act. The word Hoydipouse (or more properly Oedipus) has been rendered literally Swellfoot, without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled, *Swellfoot in Angaria*, and *Charité*, the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Tyrant Swellfoot, *King of Thebes.*
Iona Taurina, *his Queen.*
Mammon, *Arch-Priest of Famine.*
Purganax, Dakry, Laoctonos, *Wizards, Ministers of* Swellfoot.
The Gadfly.
The Leech.
The Rat.
Moses, *the Sow-gelder.*
Solomon, *the Porkman.*
Zephaniah, *Pig-butcher.*
The Minotaur.
Chorus *of the Swinish Multitude.*
Guards, Attendants, Priests, *etc., etc.*

SCENE.—THEBES

ACT I

Scene I.—*A magnificent Temple, built of thigh-bones and death's-heads, and tiled with scalps. Over the Altar the statue of Famine, veiled; a number of Boars, Sows, and Sucking-Pigs, crowned with thistle, shamrock, and oak, sitting on the steps, and clinging round the Altar of the Temple.*

Enter Swellfoot, *in his Royal robes, without perceiving the* Pigs.

Swellfoot. Thou supreme Goddess! by whose power divine
These graceful limbs are clothed in proud array
[*He contemplates himself with satisfaction.*
Of gold and purple, and this kingly paunch
Swells like a sail before a favouring breeze,
And these most sacred nether promontories
Lie satisfied with layers of fat; and these
Boeotian cheeks, like Egypt's pyramid,
(Nor with less toil were their foundations laid)[1],
Sustain the cone of my untroubled brain,
That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing!
Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors,
Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers,
Bishops and Deacons, and the entire army
Of those fat martyrs to the persecution
Of stifling turtle-soup, and brandy-devils,
Offer their secret vows! Thou plenteous Ceres
Of their Eleusis, hail!
The Swine. Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!
Swellfoot. Ha! what are ye,
Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,
Cling round this sacred shrine?
Swine. Aigh! aigh! aigh!
Swellfoot. What! ye that are
The very beasts that, offered at her altar

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[1] See Universal History for an account of the number of people who died, and the immense consumption of garlic by the wretched Egyptians, who made a sepulchre for the name as well as the bodies of their tyrants.—[Shelley's Note.]

With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards,
Ever propitiate her reluctant will
When taxes are withheld?
  Swine. Ugh! ugh! ugh!
  Swellfoot. What! ye who grub
With filthy snouts my red potatoes up
In Allan's rushy bog? Who eat the oats
Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides?
Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest
From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather,
Which should be given to cleaner Pigs than you?

The Swine.—Semichorus I.

The same, alas! the same;
Though only now the name
  Of Pig remains to me.

Semichorus II.

If 'twere your kingly will
Us wretched Swine to kill,
  What should we yield to thee?
Swellfoot. Why, skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

Chorus of Swine.

I have heard your Laureate sing
That pity was a royal thing;
Under your mighty ancestors, we Pigs
Were bless'd as nightingales on myrtle sprigs,
Or grasshoppers that live on noonday dew,
And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too;
But now our sties are fallen in, we catch
  The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch;
Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch,
  And then we seek the shelter of a ditch;
Hog-wash or grains, or ruta-baga, none
Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

First Sow.

My Pigs, 'tis in vain to tug.

Second Sow.

I could almost eat my litter.

First Pig.

I suck, but no milk will come from the dug.

Second Pig.

Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

The Boars.

We fight for this rag of greasy rug,
  Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

Semichorus.

Happier Swine were they than we,
Drowned in the Gadarean sea—
I wish that pity would drive out the devils,
Which in your royal bosom hold their revels,
And sink us in the waves of thy compassion!
Alas! the Pigs are an unhappy nation!
Now if your Majesty would have our bristles
To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons
With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles,
In policy—ask else your royal Solons—
You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw,
And sties well thatched; besides it is the law!

Swellfoot. This is sedition, and rank blasphemy!
Ho! there, my guards!

Enter a GUARD.

Guard. Your sacred Majesty.
Swellfoot. Call in the Jews, Solomon the court porkman,
Moses the sow-gelder, and Zephaniah
The hog-butcher.
Guard. They are in waiting, Sire.

Enter SOLOMON, MOSES, *and* ZEPHANIAH.

Swellfoot. Out with your knife. old Moses, and spay those Sows
[*The* PIGS *run about in consternation.*
That load the earth with Pigs; cut close and deep.
Moral restraint I see has no effect,
Nor prostitution, nor our own example,
Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison—
This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine
Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy—
Cut close and deep, good Moses.
Moses. Let your Majesty
Keep the Boars quiet, else——
Swellfoot. Zephaniah, cut
That fat Hog's throat, the brute seems overfed;
Seditious hunks! to whine for want of grains.
Zephaniah. Your sacred Majesty, he has the dropsy;—
We shall find pints of hydatids in 's liver,
He has not half an inch of wholesome fat
Upon his carious ribs——
Swellfoot. 'Tis all the same,
He'll serve instead of riot money, when
Our murmuring troops bivouac in Thebes' streets;
And January winds, after a day
Of butchering, will make them relish carrion.
Now, Solomon, I'll sell you in a lump
The whole kit of them.
Solomon. Why, your Majesty,

59 thy *ed. 1820*; your *ed. 1839.*

I could not give——
Swellfoot. Kill them out of the way,
That shall be price enough, and let me hear
Their everlasting grunts and whines no more!
[*Exeunt, driving in the* SWINE.

Enter MAMMON, *the Arch-Priest; and* PURGANAX, *Chief of the Council of Wizards.*

Purganax. The future looks as black as death, a cloud,
Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it—
The troops grow mutinous—the revenue fails—
There's something rotten in us—for the level
Of the State slopes, its very bases topple,
The boldest turn their backs upon themselves!
Mammon. Why what's the matter, my dear fellow, now?
Do the troops mutiny?—decimate some regiments;
Does money fail?—come to my mint—coin paper,
Till gold be at a discount, and ashamed
To show his bilious face, go purge himself,
In emulation of her vestal whiteness.
Purganax. Oh, would that this were all! The oracle!!
Mammon. Why it was I who spoke that oracle,
And whether I was dead drunk or inspired,
I cannot well remember; nor, in truth,
The oracle itself!
Purganax. The words went thus:—
'Boeotia, choose reform or civil war!
When through the streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with Hogs,
Riding on the Ionian Minotaur.'
Mammon. Now if the oracle had ne'er foretold
This sad alternative, it must arrive,
Or not, and so it must now that it has;
And whether I was urged by grace divine
Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words,
Which must, as all words must, be false or true,
It matters not: for the same Power made all,
Oracle, wine, and me and you—or none—
'Tis the same thing. If you knew as much
Of oracles as I do——
Purganax. You arch-priests
Believe in nothing; if you were to dream
Of a particular number in the Lottery,
You would not buy the ticket?
Mammon. Yet our tickets
Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken?
For prophecies, when once they get abroad,
Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends,
Or hypocrites who, from assuming virtue,

114 the *ed. 1820*; thy *cj. Forman; cf. Motto below Title, and II. i. 153–6.* 129 ticket? *ed. 1820*; ticket! *ed. 1839.*

Do the same actions that the virtuous do,
Contrive their own fulfilment. This Iona——
Well—you know what the chaste Pasiphae did,
Wife to that most religious King of Crete,
And still how popular the tale is here;
And these dull Swine of Thebes boast their descent
From the free Minotaur. You know they still
Call themselves Bulls, though thus degenerate,
And everything relating to a Bull
Is popular and respectable in Thebes.
Their arms are seven Bulls in a field gules;
They think their strength consists in eating beef,—
Now there were danger in the precedent
If Queen Iona——
Purganax. I have taken good care
That shall not be. I struck the crust o' the earth
With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare!
And from a cavern full of ugly shapes
I chose a Leech, a Gadfly, and a Rat.
The Gadfly was the same which Juno sent
To agitate Io[1], and which Ezekiel[2] mentions
That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains
Of utmost Aethiopia, to torment
Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast
Has a loud trumpet like the scarabee,
His crookèd tail is barbed with many stings,
Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each
Immedicable; from his convex eyes
He sees fair things in many hideous shapes,
And trumpets all his falsehood to the world.
Like other beetles he is fed on dung—
He has eleven feet with which he crawls
Trailing a blistering slime, and this foul beast
Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits,
From isle to isle, from city unto city,
Urging her flight from the far Chersonese
To fabulous Solyma, and the Aetnean Isle,
Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock,
And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez,
Aeolia and Elysium, and thy shores,
Parthenope, which now, alas! are free!
And through the fortunate Saturnian land,
Into the darkness of the West.
Mammon. But if
This Gadfly should drive Iona hither?
Purganax. Gods! what an *if!* but there is my gray Rat:
So thin with want, he can crawl in and out
Of any narrow chink and filthy hole,

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135 their own *Mrs. Shelley, later edd.*; their *edd. 1820 and 1839.*

[1] The *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus.—[Shelley's Note.]

[2] And the Lord whistled for the gadfly out of Aethiopia, and for the bee of Egypt, etc.—Ezekiel.—[Shelley's Note.]

And he shall creep into her dressing-room,
And——
Mammon. My dear friend, where are your wits? as if
She does not always toast a piece of cheese
And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough
To crawl through *such* chinks——
Purganax. But my LEECH—a leech
Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,
Capaciously expatiative, which make
His little body like a red balloon,
As full of blood as that of hydrogen,
Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks
And clings and pulls—a horse-leech, whose deep maw
The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill,
And who, till full, will cling for ever.
Mammon. This
For Queen Iona would suffice, and less;
But 'tis the Swinish multitude I fear,
And in that fear I have——
Purganax. Done what?
Mammon. Disinherited
My eldest son Chrysaor, because he
Attended public meetings, and would always
Stand prating there of commerce, public faith,
Economy, and unadulterate coin,
And other topics, ultra-radical;
And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise,
And funds in fairy-money, bonds, and bills,
Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina,
And married her to the gallows[1].
Purganax. A good match!
Mammon. A high connexion, Purganax. The bridegroom
Is of a very ancient family,
Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop,
And has great influence in both Houses;—oh!
He makes the fondest husband; nay, *too* fond,—
New-married people should not kiss in public;
But the poor souls love one another so!
And then my little grandchildren, the gibbets,
Promising children as you ever saw,—
The young playing at hanging, the elder learning
How to hold radicals. They are well taught too,
For every gibbet says its catechism
And reads a select chapter in the Bible
Before it goes to play.
[*A most tremendous humming is heard.*
Purganax. Ha! what do I hear?

Enter the GADFLY.

Mammon. Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

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[1] 'If one should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone.'—CYMBELINE.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Gadfly.

Hum! hum! hum!
From the lakes of the Alps, and the cold gray scalps
Of the mountains, I come!
Hum! hum! hum!
From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces
Of golden Byzantium;
From the temples divine of old Palestine,
From Athens and Rome,
With a ha! and a hum!
I come! I come!

All inn-doors and windows
Were open to me:
I saw all that sin does,
Which lamps hardly see
That burn in the night by the curtained bed,—
The impudent lamps! for they blushed not red,
Dinging and singing,
From slumber I rung her,
Loud as the clank of an ironmonger;
Hum! hum! hum!

Far, far, far!
With the trump of my lips, and the sting at my hips,
I drove her—afar!
Far, far, far!
From city to city, abandoned of pity,
A ship without needle or star;—
Homeless she passed, like a cloud on the blast,
Seeking peace, finding war;—
She is here in her car,
From afar, and afar;—
Hum! hum!

I have stung her and wrung her,
The venom is working;—
And if you had hung her
With canting and quirking,
She could not be deader than she will be soon;—
I have driven her close to you, under the moon,
Night and day, hum! hum! ha!
I have hummed her and drummed her
From place to place, till at last I have dumbed her,
Hum! hum! hum!

Enter the LEECH *and the* RAT.

Leech.

I will suck
Blood or muck!

260 *Edd. 1820, 1839 have no stage direction after this line.*

The disease of the state is a plethory,
Who so fit to reduce it as I?

Rat.

I'll slily seize and
Let blood from her weasand,—
Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny,
With my snaky tail, and my sides so scranny.

Purganax.

Aroint ye! thou unprofitable worm! [*To the* LEECH.
And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell!
[*To the* GADFLY.
To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings,
And the ox-headed Io——

Swine (*within*).

Ugh, ugh, ugh!
Hail! Iona the divine,
We will be no longer Swine,
But Bulls with horns and dewlaps.

Rat.

For,
You know, my lord, the Minotaur——

Purganax (*fiercely*).

Be silent! get to hell! or I will call
The cat out of the kitchen. Well, Lord Mammon,
This is a pretty business. [*Exit the* RAT.

Mammon.

I will go
And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.— [*Exit.*

Enter SWELLFOOT.

Swellfoot. She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes,
When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell!
Oh, Hymen, clothed in yellow jealousy,
And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings
The torch of Discord with its fiery hair;
This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens!
Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea,
The very name of wife had conjugal rights;
Her cursèd image ate, drank, slept with me,
And in the arms of Adiposa oft
Her memory has received a husband's——
[*A loud tumult, and cries of* 'Iona for ever!—No Swellfoot!'
Hark!
How the Swine cry Iona Taurina;
I suffer the real presence; Purganax,
Off with her head!

Purganax. But I must first impanel
A jury of the Pigs.
Swellfoot. Pack them then.
Purganax. Or fattening some few in two separate sties,
And giving them clean straw, tying some bits
Of ribbon round their legs—giving their Sows
Some tawdry lace, and bits of lustre glass,
And their young Boars white and red rags, and tails
Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers
Between the ears of the old ones; and when
They are persuaded, that by the inherent virtue
Of these things, they are all imperial Pigs,
Good Lord! they'd rip each other's bellies up,
Not to say, help us in destroying her.
Swellfoot. This plan might be tried too;—where 's General
Laoctonos?

Enter Laoctonos *and* Dakry.

It is my royal pleasure
That you, Lord General, bring the head and body,
If separate it would please me better, hither
Of Queen Iona.
Laoctonos. That pleasure I well knew,
And made a charge with those battalions bold,
Called, from their dress and grin, the royal apes,
Upon the Swine, who in a hollow square
Enclosed her, and received the first attack
Like so many rhinoceroses, and then
Retreating in good order, with bare tusks
And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe,
Bore her in triumph to the public sty.
What is still worse, some Sows upon the ground
Have given the ape-guards apples, nuts, and gin,
And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry,
'Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!'
Purganax. Hark!
The Swine (*without*). Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!
Dakry. I
Went to the garret of the swineherd's tower,
Which overlooks the sty, and made a long
Harangue (all words) to the assembled Swine,
Of delicacy, mercy, judgement, law,
Morals, and precedents, and purity,
Adultery, destitution, and divorce,
Piety, faith, and state necessity,
And how I loved the Queen!—and then I wept
With the pathos of my own eloquence,
And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which
Brained many a gaping Pig, and there was made
A slough of blood and brains upon the place,
Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round

The mill-stones rolled, ploughing the pavement up,
And hurling Sucking-Pigs into the air,
With dust and stones.——

Enter MAMMON.

Mammon. I wonder that gray wizards
Like you should be so beardless in their schemes;
It had been but a point of policy
To keep Iona and the Swine apart.
Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction
Between two parties who will govern you
But for my art.—Behold this BAG! it is
The poison BAG of that Green Spider huge,
On which our spies skulked in ovation through
The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead:
A bane so much the deadlier fills it now
As calumny is worse than death,—for here
The Gadfly's venom, fifty times distilled,
Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech,
In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which
That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant,
Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch;—
All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud,
Who is the Devil's Lord High Chancellor,
And over it the Primate of all Hell
Murmured this pious baptism:—'Be thou called
The GREEN BAG; and this power and grace be thine:
That thy contents, on whomsoever poured,
Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks
To savage, foul, and fierce deformity.
Let all baptized by thy infernal dew
Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch!
No name left out which orthodoxy loves,
Court Journal or legitimate Review!—
Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover
Of other wives and husbands than their own—
The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps!
Wither they to a ghastly caricature
Of what was human!—let not man or beast
Behold their face with unaverted eyes!
Or hear their names with ears that tingle not
With blood of indignation, rage, and shame!'—
This is a perilous liquor;—good my Lords.—
[SWELLFOOT *approaches to touch the* GREEN BAG.
Beware! for God's sake, beware!—if you should break
The seal, and touch the fatal liquor——

Purganax. There,
Give it to me. I have been used to handle
All sorts of poisons. His dread Majesty
Only desires to see the colour of it.

373 or *ed. 1820*; nor *ed. 1839.*

Mammon. Now, with a little common sense, my Lords,
Only undoing all that has been done
(Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it),
Our victory is assured. We must entice
Her Majesty from the sty, and make the Pigs
Believe that the contents of the GREEN BAG
Are the true test of guilt or innocence.
And that, if she be guilty, 'twill transform her
To manifest deformity like guilt.
If innocent, she will become transfigured
Into an angel, such as they say she is;
And they will see her flying through the air,
So bright that she will dim the noonday sun;
Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits.
This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing
Swine will believe. I'll wager you will see them
Climbing upon the thatch of their low sties,
With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail
Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps
Of one another's ears between their teeth,
To catch the coming hail of comfits in.
You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab,
Make them a solemn speech to this effect:
I go to put in readiness the feast
Kept to the honour of our goddess Famine,
Where, for more glory, let the ceremony
Take place of the uglification of the Queen.
Dakry (*to* Swellfoot). I, as the keeper of your sacred conscience,
Humbly remind your Majesty that the care
Of your high office, as Man-milliner
To red Bellona, should not be deferred.
Purganax. All part, in happier plight to meet again.
[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

Scene I.—*The Public Sty.* *The* Boars *in full Assembly.*

Enter Purganax.

Purganax. Grant me your patience, Gentlemen and Boars,
Ye, by whose patience under public burthens
The glorious constitution of these sties
Subsists, and shall subsist. The Lean-Pig rates
Grow with the growing populace of Swine,
The taxes, that true source of Piggishness
(How can I find a more appropriate term
To include religion, morals, peace, and plenty,
And all that fit Boeotia as a nation
To teach the other nations how to live?),

Increase with Piggishness itself; and still
Does the revenue, that great spring of all
The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments,
Which free-born Pigs regard with jealous eyes,
Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps,
All the land's produce will be merged in taxes,
And the revenue will amount to—nothing!
The failure of a foreign market for
Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings,
And such home manufactures, is but partial;
And, that the population of the Pigs,
Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw
And water, is a fact which is—you know—
That is—it is a state-necessity—
Temporary, of course. Those impious Pigs,
Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn
The settled Swellfoot system, or to make
Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions
Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipped
Into a loyal and an orthodox whine.
Things being in this happy state, the Queen
Iona——

[*A loud cry from the* Pigs. She is innocent! most innocent!

Purganax. That is the very thing that I was saying,
Gentlemen Swine; the Queen Iona being
Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes,
And the lean Sows and Boars collect about her,
Wishing to make her think that WE believe
(I mean those more substantial Pigs, who swill
Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw)
That she is guilty; thus, the Lean-Pig faction
Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been
Your immemorial right, and which I will
Maintain you in to the last drop of——

A Boar (*interrupting him*). What
Does any one accuse her of?

Purganax. Why, no one
Makes *any* positive accusation;—but
There were hints dropped, and so the privy wizards
Conceived that it became them to advise
His Majesty to investigate their truth;—
Not for his own sake; he could be content
To let his wife play any pranks she pleased,
If, by that sufferance, *he* could please the Pigs;
But then he fears the morals of the Swine,
The Sows especially, and what effect
It might produce upon the purity and
Religion of the rising generation
Of Sucking-Pigs, if it could be suspected
That Queen Iona—— [*A pause.*

16 land's] lands *ed. 1820.*

First Boar. Well, go on; we long
To hear what she can possibly have done.
Purganax. Why, it is hinted, that a certain Bull—
Thus much is *known*:—the milk-white Bulls that feed
Beside Clitumnus and the crystal lakes
Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews
Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel
Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath
Loading the morning winds until they faint
With living fragrance, are so beautiful!—
Well, *I* say nothing;—but Europa rode
On such a one from Asia into Crete,
And the enamoured sea grew calm beneath
His gliding beauty. And Pasiphae,
Iona's grandmother,——but *she* is innocent!
And that both you and I, and all assert.
First Boar. Most innocent!
Purganax. Behold this BAG; a bag——
Second Boar. Oh! no GREEN BAGS!! Jealousy's eyes are green,
Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts,
And verdigris, and——
Purganax. Honourable Swine,
In Piggish souls can prepossessions reign?
Allow me to remind you, grass is green—
All flesh is grass;—no bacon but is flesh—
Ye are but bacon. This divining BAG
(Which is not green, but only bacon colour)
Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er
A woman guilty of——we all know what—
Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind
She never can commit the like again.
If innocent, she will turn into an angel,
And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits
As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal
Is to convert her sacred Majesty
Into an angel (as I am sure we shall do),
By pouring on her head this mystic water. [*Showing the Bag.*
I know that she is innocent; I wish
Only to prove her so to all the world.
First Boar. Excellent, just, and noble Purganax.
Second Boar. How glorious it will be to see her Majesty
Flying above our heads, her petticoats
Streaming like—like—like—
Third Boar. Anything.
Purganax. Oh no!
But like a standard of an admiral's ship,
Or like the banner of a conquering host,
Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day,
Unravelled on the blast from a white mountain;
Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane,

Or waterfall from a dizzy precipice
Scattered upon the wind.
First Boar. Or a cow's tail.
Second Boar. Or *anything*, as the learned Boar observed.
Purganax. Gentlemen Boars, I move a resolution,
That her most sacred Majesty should be
Invited to attend the feast of Famine,
And to receive upon her chaste white body
Dews of Apotheosis from this BAG.

[*A great confusion is heard of the* PIGS OUT OF DOORS, *which communicates itself to those within. During the first Strophe, the doors of the Sty are staved in, and a number of exceedingly lean* PIGS *and* SOWS *and* BOARS *rush in.*

Semichorus I.
No! Yes!

Semichorus II.
Yes! No!

Semichorus I.
A law!

Semichorus II.
A flaw!

Semichorus I.
Porkers, we shall lose our wash,
Or must share it with the Lean-Pigs!

First Boar.
Order! order! be not rash!
Was there ever such a scene, Pigs!

An old Sow (*rushing in*).
I never saw so fine a dash
Since I first began to wean Pigs.

Second Boar (*solemnly*).
The Queen will be an angel time enough.
I vote, in form of an amendment, that
Purganax rub a little of that stuff
Upon his face.

Purganax (*his heart is seen to beat through his waistcoat*).
Gods! What would ye be at?

Semichorus I.
Purganax has plainly shown a
Cloven foot and jackdaw feather.

Semichorus II.
I vote Swellfoot and Iona
Try the magic test together;

Whenever royal spouses bicker,
Both should try the magic liquor.

An old Boar (*aside*).

A miserable state is that of Pigs,
For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs,
The Swine must bite each other's ear therefore.

An old Sow (*aside*).

A wretched lot Jove has assigned to Swine,
Squabbling makes Pig-herds hungry, and they dine
On bacon, and whip Sucking-Pigs the more.

Chorus.

Hog-wash has been ta'en away:
If the Bull-Queen is divested,
We shall be in every way
Hunted, stripped, exposed, molested;
Let us do whate'er we may,
That she shall not be arrested.
Queen, we entrench you with walls of brawn,
And palisades of tusks, sharp as a bayonet:
Place your most sacred person here. We pawn
Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it.
Those who wrong you, wrong us;
Those who hate you, hate us;
Those who sting you, sting us;
Those who bait you, bait us;
The *oracle* is now about to be
Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny;
Which says: 'Thebes, choose *reform* or *civil war*,
When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with Hogs,
Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

Enter Iona Taurina.

Iona Taurina (*coming forward*). Gentlemen Swine, and gentle Lady-Pigs,
The tender heart of every Boar acquits
Their Queen, of any act incongruous
With native Piggishness, and she, reposing
With confidence upon the grunting nation,
Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all,
Her innocence, into their Hoggish arms;
Nor has the expectation been deceived
Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great Boars,
(For such whoever lives among you finds you,
And so do I), the innocent are proud!
I have accepted your protection only
In compliment of your kind love and care,

154 streets instead *ed. 1820.*

Not for necessity. The innocent
Are safest there where trials and dangers wait;
Innocent Queens o'er white-hot ploughshares tread
Unsinged, and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it[1],
Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still,
Walked from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway,
Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry,
White-boys and Orange-boys, and constables,
Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured!
Thus I!——
Lord Purganax, I do commit myself
Into your custody, and am prepared
To stand the test, whatever it may be!
Purganax. This magnanimity in your sacred Majesty
Must please the Pigs. You cannot fail of being
A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass,
Ye loyal Swine, or her transfiguration
Will blind your wondering eyes.
An old Boar (*aside*). Take care, my Lord,
They do not smoke you first.
Purganax. At the approaching feast
Of Famine, let the expiation be.
Swine. Content! content!
Iona Taurina (*aside*). I, most content of all,
Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall!
[*Exeunt omnes.*

Scene II.—*The interior of the Temple of Famine. The statue of the Goddess, a skeleton clothed in parti-coloured rags, seated upon a heap of skulls and loaves intermingled. A number of exceedingly fat Priests in black garments arrayed on each side, with marrow-bones and cleavers in their hands.* [Solomon, *the Court Porkman.*] *A flourish of trumpets.*

Enter Mammon *as arch-priest,* Swellfoot, Dakry, Purganax, Laoctonos, *followed by* Iona Taurina *guarded. On the other side enter the* Swine.

Chorus of Priests, *accompanied by the* Court Porkman *on marrow-bones and cleavers.*

Goddess bare, and gaunt, and pale,
Empress of the world, all hail!
What though Cretans old called thee
City-crested Cybele?
We call thee Famine!
Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming!
Through thee, for emperors, kings, and priests and lords,
Who rule by viziers, sceptres, bank-notes, words,

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[1] 'Rich and rare were the gems she wore.' See Moore's *Irish Melodies.*—[Shelley's Note.]

The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits,
Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots—
Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat,
Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean,
Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that!
And let things be as they have ever been;
At least while we remain thy priests,
And proclaim thy fasts and feasts.
Through thee the sacred SWELLFOOT dynasty
Is based upon a rock amid that sea
Whose waves are Swine—so let it ever be!

[SWELLFOOT, *etc., seat themselves at a table magnificently covered at the upper end of the Temple. Attendants pass over the stage with hog-wash in pails. A number of* PIGS, *exceedingly lean, follow them licking up the wash.*

Mammon. I fear your sacred Majesty has lost
The appetite which you were used to have.
Allow me now to recommend this dish—
A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook,
Such as is served at the great King's second table.
The price and pains which its ingredients cost
Might have maintained some dozen families
A winter or two—not more—so plain a dish
Could scarcely disagree.—
Swellfoot. After the trial,
And these fastidious Pigs are gone, perhaps
I may recover my lost appetite,—
I feel the gout flying about my stomach—
Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.
Purganax (*filling his glass, and standing up*). The glorious Constitution of the Pigs!
All. A toast! a toast! stand up, and three times three!
Dakry. No heel-taps—darken daylights!—
Laoctonos. Claret, somehow,
Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!
Swellfoot. Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment,
But 'tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine,
And shed more blood, than any man in Thebes.
[*To* PURGANAX.
For God's sake stop the grunting of those Pigs!
Purganax. We dare not, Sire, 'tis Famine's privilege.

Chorus of Swine.

Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!
Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags;
Thou devil which livest on damning;
Saint of new churches, and cant, and GREEN BAGS,
Till in pity and terror thou risest,
Confounding the schemes of the wisest;

When thou liftest thy skeleton form,
  When the loaves and the skulls roll about,
We will greet thee—the voice of a storm
  Would be lost in our terrible shout!

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!
  Hail to thee, Empress of Earth!
When thou risest, dividing possessions;
When thou risest, uprooting oppressions,
  In the pride of thy ghastly mirth;
Over palaces, temples, and graves,
We will rush as thy minister-slaves,
Trampling behind in thy train,
Till all be made level again!

Mammon. I hear a crackling of the giant bones
Of the dread image, and in the black pits
Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames.
These prodigies are oracular, and show
The presence of the unseen Deity.
Mighty events are hastening to their doom!
Swellfoot. I only hear the lean and mutinous Swine
Grunting about the temple.
Dakry. In a crisis
Of such exceeding delicacy, I think
We ought to put her Majesty, the QUEEN,
Upon her trial without delay.
Mammon. THE BAG
Is here.
Purganax. I have rehearsed the entire scene
With an ox-bladder and some ditchwater,
On Lady P——; it cannot fail. (*Taking up the Bag.*) Your
Majesty [*To* SWELLFOOT.
In such a filthy business had better
Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you.
A spot or two on me would do no harm,
Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad Genius
Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell,
Upon my brow—which would stain all its seas,
But which those seas could never wash away!
Iona Taurina. My Lord, I am ready—nay, I am impatient
To undergo the test.

[*A graceful figure in a semi-transparent veil passes unnoticed through the Temple; the word* LIBERTY *is seen through the veil, as if it were written in fire upon its forehead. Its words are almost drowned in the furious grunting of the* PIGS, *and the business of the trial. She kneels on the steps of the Altar, and speaks in tones at first faint and low, but which ever become louder and louder.*

Mighty Empress! Death's white wife!
Ghastly mother-in-law of Life!

By the God who made thee such,
By the magic of thy touch,
By the starving and the cramming
Of fasts and feasts! by thy dread self, O Famine!
I charge thee! when thou wake the multitude,
Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood.
The earth did never mean her foison
For those who crown life's cup with poison
Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge—
But for those radiant spirits, who are still
The standard-bearers in the van of Change.
Be they th' appointed stewards, to fill
The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age!—
Remit, O Queen! thy accustomed rage!
Be what thou art not! In voice faint and low
FREEDOM calls *Famine*,—her eternal foe,
To brief alliance, hollow truce.—Rise now!

[*Whilst the Veiled Figure has been chanting this strophe*, MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS, *and* SWELLFOOT, *have surrounded* IONA TAURINA, *who, with her hands folded on her breast, and her eyes lifted to Heaven, stands, as with saint-like resignation, to wait the issue of the business, in perfect confidence of her innocence.*

[PURGANAX, *after unsealing the* GREEN BAG, *is gravely about to pour the liquor upon her head, when suddenly the whole expression of her figure and countenance changes; she snatches it from his hand with a loud laugh of triumph, and empties it over* SWELLFOOT *and his whole Court, who are instantly changed into a number of filthy and ugly animals, and rush out of the Temple. The image of* FAMINE *then arises with a tremendous sound, the* PIGS *begin scrambling for the loaves, and are tripped up by the skulls; all those who* EAT *the loaves are turned into* BULLS, *and arrange themselves quietly behind the altar. The image of* FAMINE *sinks through a chasm in the earth, and a* MINOTAUR *rises.*

Minotaur. I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest
Of all Europa's taurine progeny—
I am the old traditional Man-Bull;
And from my ancestors having been Ionian,
I am called Ion, which, by interpretation,
Is JOHN; in plain Theban, that is to say,
My name's JOHN BULL; I am a famous hunter,
And can leap any gate in all Boeotia,
Even the palings of the royal park,
Or double ditch about the new enclosures;
And if your Majesty will deign to mount me,
At least till you have hunted down your game,
I will not throw you.

Iona Taurina. (*During this speech she has been putting on boots and spurs, and a hunting-cap, buckishly cocked on one side, and tucking up her hair, she leaps nimbly on his back.*) Hoa! hoa! tallyho! tallyho! ho! ho!

Come, let us hunt these ugly badgers down,
These stinking foxes, these devouring otters,
These hares, these wolves, these anything but men.
Hey, for a whipper-in! my loyal Pigs,
Now let your noses be as keen as beagles',
Your steps as swift as greyhounds', and your cries
More dulcet and symphonious than the bells
Of village-towers, on sunshine holiday;
Wake all the dewy woods with jangling music.
Give them no law (are they not beasts of blood?)
But such as they gave you. Tallyho! ho!
Through forest, furze, and bog, and den, and desert,
Pursue the ugly beasts! tallyho! ho!

Full Chorus of IONA *and the* SWINE.

Tallyho! tallyho!
Through rain, hail, and snow,
Through brake, gorse, and briar,
Through fen, flood, and mire,
We go! we go!

Tallyho! tallyho!
Through pond, ditch, and slough,
Wind them, and find them,
Like the Devil behind them,
Tallyho! tallyho!

[*Exeunt, in full cry;* IONA *driving on the* SWINE, *with the empty* GREEN BAG.

THE END.

NOTE ON OEDIPUS TYRANNUS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

IN the brief journal I kept in those days, I find recorded, in August, 1820, Shelley 'begins *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, suggested by the pigs at the fair of San Giuliano.' This was the period of Queen Caroline's landing in England, and the struggles made by George IV to get rid of her claims; which failing, Lord Castlereagh placed the '*Green Bag*' on the table of the House of Commons, demanding in the King's name that an inquiry should be instituted into his wife's conduct. These circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano. A friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his *Ode to Liberty*; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the 'chorus of frogs' in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and, it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political-satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus—and *Swellfoot* was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed, and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

Hesitation of whether it would do honour to Shelley prevented my publishing it at first. But I cannot bring myself to keep back anything he ever wrote; for each word is fraught with the peculiar views and sentiments which he believed to be beneficial to the human race, and the bright light of poetry irradiates every thought. The world has a right to the entire compositions of such a man; for it does not live and thrive by the outworn lesson of the dullard or the hypocrite, but by the original free thoughts of men of genius, who aspire to pluck bright truth

> 'from the pale-faced moon;
> Or dive into the bottom of the deep
> Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
> And pluck up drowned'

truth. Even those who may dissent from his opinions will consider that he was a man of genius, and that the world will take more interest in his slightest word than in the waters of Lethe which are so eagerly prescribed as medicinal for all its wrongs and woe. This drama, however, must not be judged for more than was meant. It is a mere plaything of the imagination; which even may not excite smiles among many, who will not see wit in those combinations of thought which were full of the ridiculous to the author. But, like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name.

EPIPSYCHIDION

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE LADY, EMILIA V——,

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro.

HER OWN WORDS.

[*Epipsychidion* was composed at Pisa, Jan., Feb., 1821, and published without the author's name, in the following summer, by C. & J. Ollier, London. The poem was included by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, both edd. Amongst the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian is a first draft of *Epipsychidion*, 'consisting of three versions, more or less complete, of the *Preface* [*Advertisement*], a version in ink and pencil, much cancelled, of the last eighty lines of the poem, and some additional lines which did not appear in print' (*Examination of the*

Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library, by C. D. Locock. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903, p. 3). This draft, the writing of which is 'extraordinarily confused and illegible,' has been carefully deciphered and printed by Mr. Locock in the volume named above. Our text follows that of the *editio princeps*, 1821.]

ADVERTISEMENT

The Writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that *gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.*

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite page[1] is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone

> *Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.*

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity. S.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
Thee to base company (as chance may do),
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight! tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

EPIPSYCHIDION

Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

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[1] i.e. *the nine lines which follow, beginning*, 'My Song, I fear,' etc.—Ed.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage,
Pourest such music, that it might assuage
The ruggèd hearts of those who prisoned thee,
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-wingèd Heart! who dost for ever
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!
Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form
Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!
Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror
In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!
Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
I love thee; though the world by no thin name
Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.
Would we two had been twins of the same mother!
Or, that the name my heart lent to another
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity!
Yet were one lawful and the other true,
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burned its wings
Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
Young Love should teach Time, in his own gray style,
All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless?
A well of sealed and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star
Which moves not in the moving heavens, alone?
A Smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
Amid rude voices? a belovèd light?
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?
A Lute, which those whom Love has taught to play
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
And lull fond Grief asleep? a buried treasure?
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?
A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,
And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,
And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
Were less aethereally light: the brightness
Of her divinest presence trembles through
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
Embodied in the windless heaven of June
Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the Moon
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops
Of planetary music heard in trance.
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap
Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.
The glory of her being, issuing thence,
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade
Of unentangled intermixture, made
By Love, of light and motion: one intense
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing,
Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing
With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,)
Continuously prolonged, and ending never,

100 morning] morn may *Rossetti cj.*

Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress
And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
The air of her own speed has disentwined,
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt
Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—
See where she stands! a mortal shape indued
With love and life and light and deity,
And motion which may change but cannot die;
An image of some bright Eternity;
A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour
Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender
Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
Under whose motions life's dull billows move;
A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning;
A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
Into his summer grave.
                                        Ah, woe is me!
What have I dared? where am I lifted? how
Shall I descend, and perish not? I know
That Love makes all things equal: I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
In love and worship, blends itself with God.

  Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate
Whose course has been so starless! O too late
Belovèd! O too soon adored, by me!
For in the fields of Immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
A divine presence in a place divine;
Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel
That on the fountain of my heart a seal
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.
We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,
For one another, though dissimilar;
Such difference without discord, as can make
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

  Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked.
I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select

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118 of] on *ed. 1839.*

Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and so
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,
Imagination! which from earth and sky,
And from the depths of human fantasy,
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:
Evil from good; misery from happiness;
The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must endure.
If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not
How much, while any yet remains unshared,
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
By which those live, to whom this world of life
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore,
Under the gray beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,

That I beheld her not. In solitudes
Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,
And from the fountains, and the odours deep
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep
Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,
Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air;
And from the breezes whether low or loud,
And from the rain of every passing cloud,
And from the singing of the summer-birds,
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words
Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,
Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm
Which with the shattered present chokes the past;
And in that best philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom;
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,
And towards the lodestar of my one desire,
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—
But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,
Passed, like a God throned on a wingèd planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
I would have followed, though the grave between
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen:
When a voice said:—'O thou of hearts the weakest,
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest.'
Then I—'Where?'—the world's echo answered 'where?'
And in that silence, and in my despair,
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;
And murmured names and spells which have control
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate;
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
The night which closed on her; nor uncreate
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her:
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear
And every gentle passion sick to death,
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
Into the wintry forest of our life;
And struggling through its error with vain strife,

And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
And half bewildered by new forms, I passed,
Seeking among those untaught foresters
If I could find one form resembling hers,
In which she might have masked herself from me.
There,—One, whose voice was venomed melody
Sate by a well, under blue nightshade bowers:
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
Her touch was as electric poison,—flame
Out of her looks into my vitals came,
And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
Into the core of my green heart, and lay
Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown gray
O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
The shadow of that idol of my thought.
And some were fair—but beauty dies away:
Others were wise—but honeyed words betray:
And One was true—oh! why not true to me?
Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day
Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain.
When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again
Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed
As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed
As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;
The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,
Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,
That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,
And warms not but illumines. Young and fair
As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
From its own darkness, until all was bright
Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,
And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,
She led me to a cave in that wild place,
And sate beside me, with her downward face
Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.
And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
And all my being became bright or dim
As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
According as she smiled or frowned on me;
And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:
Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:—

For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
And through the cavern without wings they flew,
And cried 'Away, he is not of our crew.'
I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;—
And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
And who was then its Tempest; and when She,
The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast
The moving billows of my being fell
Into a death of ice, immovable;—
And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
These words conceal:—If not, each word would be
The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me!

At length, into the obscure Forest came
The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,
And from her presence life was radiated
Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead;
So that her way was paved, and roofed above
With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;
And music from her respiration spread
Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated
By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
So that the savage winds hung mute around;
And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair
Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air:
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is changed to love, this glorious One
Floated into the cavern where I lay,
And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
Was penetrating me with living light:
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
This world of love, this *me*; and into birth
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
Magnetic might into its central heart;

And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
By everlasting laws, each wind and tide
To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
The armies of the rainbow-wingèd showers;
And, as those married lights, which from the towers
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe;
And all their many-mingled influence blend,
If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;—
So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
Govern my sphere of being, night and day!
Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;
Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that convulsion,
Alternating attraction and repulsion,
Thine went astray and that was rent in twain;
Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
Be there Love's folding-star at thy return;
The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn
In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn
Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
And lights and shadows; as the star of Death
And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild
Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled
Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
A World shall be the altar.
                                        Lady mine,
Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth
Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

  The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
To whatsoe'er of dull mortality
Is mine, remain a vestal sister still;
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
The hour is come:—the destined Star has risen
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
The sentinels—but true Love never yet

Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath,
Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;
For it can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos.
Emily,
A ship is floating in the harbour now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;
There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
No keel has ever ploughed that path before;
The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;
The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;
The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?
Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
Is a far Eden of the purple East;
And we between her wings will sit, while Night,
And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
Simple and spirited; innocent and bold.
The blue Aegean girds this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the shore
Undulate with the undulating tide:
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide;
And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year)
Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
Illumining, with sound that never fails
Accompany the noonday nightingales;
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;
The light clear element which the isle wears

405 it] he *ed. 1839.*

Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison:
Which is a soul within the soul—they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air.
It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they
Sail onward far upon their fatal way:
The wingèd storms, chanting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen
O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
Filling their bare and void interstices.—
But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know:
'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height
It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
But, as it were Titanic; in the heart
Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
Lifting itself in caverns light and high:
For all the antique and learnèd imagery

Has been erased, and in the place of it
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit
The volumes of their many-twining stems;
Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky
Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed
Thee to be lady of the solitude.—
And I have fitted up some chambers there
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which flow
Like waves above the living waves below.—
I have sent books and music there, and all
Those instruments with which high Spirits call
The future from its cradle, and the past
Out of its grave, and make the present last
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,
Folded within their own eternity.
Our simple life wants little, and true taste
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,
Nature with all her children haunts the hill.
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight
Before our gate, and the slow, silent night
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years heap
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,
Let us become the overhanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour;
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,

501 many-twining] many twining *ed. prin. 1821.* 504 winter-woof] inter-woof *Rossetti cj.*

Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—
Possessing and possessed by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
Through which the awakened day can never peep;
A veil for our seclusion, close as night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.
And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words, to live again in looks, which dart
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
Harmonizing silence without a sound.
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,
And our veins beat together; and our lips
With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them, and the wells
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
Confused in Passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning sun.
We shall become the same, we shall be one
Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
Burning, yet ever inconsumable:
In one another's substance finding food,
Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:
One hope within two wills, one will beneath
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
And one annihilation. Woe is me!
The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
Into the height of Love's rare Universe,
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire—
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
And say:—'We are the masters of thy slave;
What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?'
Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,
All singing loud: 'Love's very pain is sweet,

But its reward is in the world divine
Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.
So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
And bid them love each other and be blessed:
And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

FRAGMENTS CONNECTED WITH EPIPSYCHIDION

[Of the fragments of verse that follow, lines 1–37, 62–92 were printed by Mrs. Shelley in *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd edition; lines 1–174 were printed or reprinted by Dr. Garnett in *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; and lines 175–186 were printed by Mr. C. D. Locock from the first draft of *Epipsychidion* amongst the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library. See *Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 12, 13. The three early drafts of the *Preface* (*Advertisement*) were printed by Mr. Locock in the same volume, pp. 4, 5.]

THREE EARLY DRAFTS OF THE PREFACE (ADVERTISEMENT)

PREFACE I

The following Poem was found amongst other papers in the Portfolio of a young Englishman with whom the Editor had contracted an intimacy at Florence, brief indeed, but sufficiently long to render the Catastrophe by which it terminated one of the most painful events of his life.—

The literary merit of the Poem in question may not be considerable; but worse verses are printed every day, &

He was an accomplished & amiable person but his error was, θνητος ὢν μη θνητα φρονειν,—his fate is an additional proof that 'The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.'—He had framed to himself certain opinions, founded no doubt upon the truth of things, but built up to a Babel height; they fell by their own weight, & the thoughts that were his architects, became unintelligible one to the other, as men upon whom confusion of tongues has fallen.

[These] verses seem to have been written as a sort of dedication of some work to have been presented to the person whom they address: but his papers afford no trace of such a work—The circumstances to which [they] the poem allude, may easily be understood by those to whom [the] spirit of the poem itself is [un]intelligible: a detail of facts, sufficiently romantic in [themselves but] their combinations

The melancholy [task] charge of consigning the body of my poor friend to the grave, was committed to me by his desolated family. I caused him to be buried in a spot selected by himself, & on the h

PREFACE II

[Epips] T. E. V. Epipsych
Lines addressed to
the Noble Lady
[Emilia] [E. V.]
Emilia

[The following Poem was found in the PF. of a young Englishman, who died on his passage from Leghorn to the Levant. He had bought one of the Sporades] He was accompanied by a lady [who might have been] supposed to be his wife, & an effeminate looking youth, to whom he shewed an [attachment] so [singular] excessive an attachment as to give rise to the suspicion, that she was a woman—At his death this suspicion was confirmed ; object speedily found a refuge both from the taunts of the brute multitude, and from the of her grief in the same grave that contained her lover.—He had bought one of the Sporades, & fitted up a Saracenic castle which accident had preserved in some repair with simple elegance, & it was his intention to dedicate the remainder of his life to undisturbed intercourse with his companions

These verses apparently were intended as a dedication of a longer poem or series of poems

PREFACE III

The writer of these lines died at Florence in [January 1820] while he was preparing * * for one wildest of the of the Sporades, where he bought & fitted up the ruins of some old building—His life was singular, less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which they received from his own character & feelings—

The verses were apparently intended by the writer to accompany some longer poem or collection of poems, of which there* [are no remnants in his] * * * remains [in his] portfolio.—

The editor is induced to

The present poem, like the vita Nova of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter of fact history of the circumstances to which it relate, & to a certain other class, it must & ought ever to remain incomprehensible—It was evidently intended to be prefixed to a longer poem or series of poems—but among his papers there are no traces of such a collection.

PASSAGES OF THE POEM, OR CONNECTED THEREWITH

Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you ;
I have already dedicated two
To other friends, one female and one male,—
What you are, is a thing that I must veil ;
What can this be to those who praise or rail ?
I never was attached to that great sect
Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the world a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion—though 'tis in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road

Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world—and so
With one sad friend, and many a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Free love has this, different from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.
Like ocean, which the general north wind breaks
Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes
A mirror of the moon—like some great glass,
Which did distort whatever form might pass,
Dashed into fragments by a playful child,
Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild;
Giving for one, which it could ne'er express,
A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise,
I should disdain to quote authorities
In commendation of this kind of love:—
Why there is first the God in heaven above,
Who wrote a book called Nature, 'tis to be
Reviewed, I hear, in the next Quarterly;
And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece,
And Jesus Christ Himself, did never cease
To urge all living things to love each other,
And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother
The Devil of disunion in their souls.

. . . .

I love you!—Listen, O embodied Ray
Of the great Brightness; I must pass away
While you remain, and these light words must be
Tokens by which you may remember me.
Start not—the thing you are is unbetrayed,
If you are human, and if but the shade
Of some sublimer spirit . . . .

. . . .

And as to friend or mistress, 'tis a form;
Perhaps I wish you were one. Some declare
You a familiar spirit, as you are;
Others with a   more inhuman
Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman;
What is the colour of your eyes and hair?
Why, if you were a lady, it were fair
The world should know—but, as I am afraid,
The Quarterly would bait you if betrayed;
And if, as it will be sport to see them stumble
Over all sorts of scandals, hear them mumble
Their litany of curses—some guess right,
And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite;

Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes,
Which looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes
The very soul that the soul is gone
Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone.

. . . .

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm,
A happy and auspicious bird of calm,
Which rides o'er life's ever tumultuous Ocean;
A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion;
A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are,
Lifts its bold head into the world's frore air,
And blooms most radiantly when others die.
Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity;
And with the light and odour of its bloom,
Shining within the dungeon and the tomb;
Whose coming is as light and music are
'Mid dissonance and gloom—a star
Which moves not 'mid the moving heavens alone—
A smile among dark frowns—a gentle tone
Among rude voices, a belovèd light,
A solitude, a refuge, a delight.
If I had but a friend! Why, I have three
Even by my own confession; there may be
Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind
To call my friends all who are wise and kind,—
And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few;
But none can ever be more dear than you.
Why should they be? My muse has lost her wings,
Or like a dying swan who soars and sings,
I should describe you in heroic style,
But as it is, are you not void of guile?
A lovely soul, formed to be blessed and bless:
A well of sealed and secret happiness;
A lute which those whom Love has taught to play
Make music on to cheer the roughest day,
And enchant sadness till it sleeps? . . . .

. . . .

To the oblivion whither I and thou,
All loving and all lovely, hasten now
With steps, ah, too unequal! may we meet
In one Elysium or one winding-sheet!

If any should be curious to discover
Whether to you I am a friend or lover,
Let them read Shakespeare's sonnets, taking thence
A whetstone for their dull intelligence
That tears and will not cut, or let them guess
How Diotima, the wise prophetess,
Instructed the instructor, and why he
Rebuked the infant spirit of melody

On Agathon's sweet lips, which as he spoke
Was as the lovely star when morn has broke
The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn,
Half-hidden, and yet beautiful.
                                                  I'll pawn
My hopes of Heaven—you know what they are worth—
That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth,
If they could tell the riddle offered here
Would scorn to be, or being to appear
What now they seem and are—but let them chide,
They have few pleasures in the world beside;
Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden,
Paradise fruits are sweetest when forbidden.
Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

. . . .

Farewell, if it can be to say farewell
To those who

. . . .

I will not, as most dedicators do,
Assure myself and all the world and you,
That you are faultless—would to God they were
Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear
These heavy chains of life with a light spirit,
And would to God I were, or even as near it
As you, dear heart. Alas! what are we? Clouds
Driven by the wind in warring multitudes,
Which rain into the bosom of the earth,
And rise again, and in our death and birth,
And through our restless life, take as from heaven
Hues which are not our own, but which are given,
And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance
Flash from the spirit to the countenance.
There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God
Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode,
A Pythian exhalation, which inspires
Love, only love—a wind which o'er the wires
Of the soul's giant harp
There is a mood which language faints beneath;
You feel it striding, as Almighty Death
His bloodless steed. . . .

. . . .

And what is that most brief and bright delight
Which rushes through the touch and through the sight,
And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,
A naked Seraph? None hath ever known.
Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;
Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,
Not to be touched but to be felt alone,
It fills the world with glory—and is gone.

. . . .

It floats with rainbow pinions o'er the stream
Of life, which flows, like a   dream
Into the light of morning, to the grave
As to an ocean . . . .

. . . .

What is that joy which serene infancy
Perceives not, as the hours content them by,
Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys
The shapes of this new world, in giant toys
Wrought by the busy   ever new?
Remembrance borrows Fancy's glass, to show
These forms more   sincere
Than now they are, than then, perhaps, they were.
When everything familiar seemed to be
Wonderful, and the immortality
Of this great world, which all things must inherit,
Was felt as one with the awakening spirit,
Unconscious of itself, and of the strange
Distinctions which in its proceeding change
It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were
A desolation . . . .

. . . .

Were it not a sweet refuge, Emily,
For all those exiles from the dull insane
Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain,
For all that band of sister-spirits known
To one another by a voiceless tone?

. . . .

If day should part us night will mend division
And if sleep parts us—we will meet in vision
And if life parts us—we will mix in death
Yielding our mite [?] of unreluctant breath
Death cannot part us—we must meet again
In all in nothing in delight in pain:
How, why or when or where—it matters not
So that we share an undivided lot. . . . .

. . . .

And we will move possessing and possessed
Wherever beauty on the earth's bare [?] breast
Lies like the shadow of thy soul—till we
Become one being with the world we see. . . .

ADONAIS

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS, AUTHOR OF ENDYMION, HYPERION, ETC.

> Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἑῷος·
> νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἕσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.—PLATO.

[*Adonais* was composed at Pisa during the early days of June, 1821, and printed, with the author's name, at Pisa, 'with the types of Didot,' by July 13, 1821. Part of the impression was sent to the brothers Ollier for sale in London. An exact reprint of this Pisa edition (a few typographical errors only being corrected) was issued in 1829 by Gee & Bridges, Cambridge, at the instance of Arthur Hallam and Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton). The poem was included in Galignani's edition of *Coleridge, Shelley and Keats*, Paris, 1829, and by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works* of 1839. Mrs. Shelley's text presents three important variations from that of the *ed. princeps*. In 1876 an edition of the *Adonais*, with Introduction and Notes, was printed for private circulation by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. Ten years later a reprint 'in exact facsimile' of the Pisa edition was edited with a Bibliographical Introduction by Mr. T. J. Wise (*Shelley Society Publications*, 2nd Series, No. 1, Reeves & Turner, London, 1886). Our text is that of the *ed. princeps*, Pisa, 1821, modified by Mrs. Shelley's text of 1839. The readings of the *ed. princeps*, wherever superseded, are recorded in the footnotes. The Editor's Notes at the end of the volume should be consulted.]

PREFACE

> Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.
> πῶς τευ τοῖς χείλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοὐκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
> τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,
> ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ᾠδάν.
> —MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.

IT is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the —— of —— 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgements from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

ADONAIS

I

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
O. weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: 'With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!'

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veilèd eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,

Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished—
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last.
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

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49 true-love] true love *edd. 1821, 1839.* 72 Of change, &c. *so edd. 1829* (*Galignani*), *1839*; Of mortal change, shall fill the grave which is her maw *ed. 1821.* 81 or *ed. 1821*; nor *ed. 1839.*

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries;
'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,

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105 his *ed. 1821*; its *ed. 1839*.

Dimmed the aëreal eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

126 round *ed. 1821*; around *ed. 1839*. 143 faint companions *ed. 1839*; drooping comrades *ed. 1821*.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning?—the intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs.'
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!'
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear

So struck, so roused, so rapped Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aery tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death.
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI

'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII

'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

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204 *See Editor's Note.*

XXVIII

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,

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252 lying low *ed. 1839*; as they go *ed. 1821.*

A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;

Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry,
'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness
Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near:
'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;

The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are. 495

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF ADONAIS

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

PASSAGES OF THE PREFACE

. . . the expression of my indignation and sympathy. I will allow myself a first and last word on the subject of calumny as it relates to me. As an author I have dared and invited censure. If I understand myself, I have written neither for profit nor for fame. I have employed my poetical compositions and publications simply as the instruments of that sympathy between myself and others which the ardent and unbounded love I cherished for my kind incited me to acquire. I expected all sorts of stupidity and insolent contempt from those . . .

. . . These compositions (excepting the tragedy of *The Cenci*, which was written rather to try my powers than to unburthen my full heart) are insufficiently . . . commendation than perhaps they deserve, even from their bitterest enemies; but they have not attained any corresponding popularity. As a man, I shrink from notice and regard; the ebb and flow of the world vexes me; I desire to be left in peace. Persecution, contumely, and calumny have been heaped upon me in profuse measure; and domestic conspiracy and legal oppression have violated in my person the most sacred rights of nature and humanity. The bigot will say it was the recompense of my errors; the man of the world will call it the result of my imprudence; but never upon one head . . .

. . . Reviewers, with some rare exceptions, are a most stupid and malignant race. As a bankrupt thief turns thieftaker in despair, so an unsuccessful author turns critic. But a young spirit panting for fame, doubtful of its powers, and certain only of its aspirations, is ill qualified to assign its true value to the sneer of this world. He knows not that such stuff as this is of the abortive and monstrous births which time consumes as fast as it produces. He sees the truth and falsehood, the merits and demerits, of his case inextricably entangled . . . No personal offence should have drawn from me this public comment upon such stuff . . .

. . . The offence of this poor victim seems to have consisted solely in his intimacy with Leigh Hunt, Mr. Hazlitt, and some other enemies of despotism and superstition. My friend Hunt has a very hard skull to crack, and will take a deal of killing. I do not know much of Mr. Hazlitt, but . . .

. . . I knew personally but little of Keats; but on the news of his situation I wrote to him, suggesting the propriety of trying the Italian climate, and inviting him to join me. Unfortunately he did not allow me . . .

Passages of the Poem

And ever as he went he swept a lyre
Of unaccustomed shape, and   strings
Now like the   of impetuous fire,
Which shakes the forest with its murmurings,
Now like the rush of the aëreal wings
Of the enamoured wind among the treen,
Whispering unimaginable things,
And dying on the streams of dew serene,
Which feed the unmown meads with ever-during green.

. . . .

And the green Paradise which western waves
Embosom in their ever-wailing sweep,
Talking of freedom to their tongueless caves,
Or to the spirits which within them keep
A record of the wrongs which, though they sleep,
Die not, but dream of retribution, heard
His hymns, and echoing them from steep to steep,
Kept——

. . . .

And then came one of sweet and earnest looks,
Whose soft smiles to his dark and night-like eyes
Were as the clear and ever-living brooks
Are to the obscure fountains whence they rise,
Showing how pure they are: a Paradise
Of happy truth upon his forehead low
Lay, making wisdom lovely, in the guise
Of earth-awakening morn upon the brow
Of star-deserted heaven, while ocean gleams below.

His song, though very sweet, was low and faint,
A simple strain——

. . . .

A mighty Phantasm, half concealed
In darkness of his own exceeding light,
Which clothed his awful presence unrevealed,
Charioted on the   night
Of thunder-smoke, whose skirts were chrysolite.

And like a sudden meteor, which outstrips
The splendour-wingèd chariot of the sun,
                                        eclipse
The armies of the golden stars, each one
Pavilioned in its tent of light—all strewn
Over the chasms of blue night——

HELLAS

A LYRICAL DRAMA

ΜΑΝΤΙΣ 'ΕΙΜ' 'ΕΣΘΛΩΝ 'ΑΓΩΝΩΝ.—Oedip. Colon.

[*Hellas* was composed at Pisa in the autumn of 1821, and dispatched to London, November 11. It was published, with the author's name, by C. & J. Ollier in the spring of 1822. A transcript of the poem by Edward Williams is in the Rowfant Library. Ollier availed himself of Shelley's permission to cancel certain passages in the notes; he also struck out certain lines of the text. These omissions were, some of them, restored in Galignani's one-volume edition of *Coleridge, Shelley and Keats*, Paris, 1829, and also by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works*, 1839. A passage in the *Preface*, suppressed by Ollier, was restored by Mr. Buxton Forman (1892) from a proof copy of *Hellas* in his possession. The *Prologue to Hellas* was edited by Dr. Garnett in 1862 (*Relics of Shelley*) from the MSS. at Boscombe Manor.

Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1822, corrected by a list of *Errata* sent by Shelley to Ollier, April 11, 1822. The Editor's Notes at the end of the volume should be consulted.]

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO

LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA

THE DRAMA OF HELLAS IS INSCRIBED AS AN

IMPERFECT TOKEN OF THE ADMIRATION,

SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP OF

THE AUTHOR.

Pisa, *November* 1, 1821.

PREFACE

The poem of *Hellas*, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The *Persae* of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilisation and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment, greater than the loss of such a reward, which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only *goat-song* which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilised world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilisation, rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders—and that below the level of ordinary degradation—let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of *Anastasius* could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The University of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilisation.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

[Should the English people ever become free, they will reflect upon the part which those who presume to represent their will have played in the great drama of the revival of liberty, with feelings which it would become them to anticipate. This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and every one of those ringleaders of the privileged gangs of murderers and swindlers, called Sovereigns, look to each other for aid against the common enemy, and suspend their mutual jealousies in the presence of a mightier fear. Of this holy alliance all the despots of the earth are virtual members. But a new race has arisen throughout Europe, nursed in the abhorrence of the opinions which are its chains, and she will continue to produce fresh generations to accomplish that destiny which tyrants foresee and dread[1].]

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe, and that enemy well knows the power and the cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

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[1] This paragraph, suppressed in 1822 by Charles Ollier, was first restored in 1892 by Mr. Buxton Forman [*Poetical Works of P. B. S.*, vol. iv. pp. 40-1] from a proof copy of *Hellas* in his possession.

PROLOGUE TO HELLAS

Herald of Eternity. It is the day when all the sons of God
Wait in the roofless senate-house, whose floor
Is Chaos, and the immovable abyss
Frozen by His steadfast word to hyaline

. . . .

The shadow of God, and delegate
Of that before whose breath the universe
Is as a print of dew.
Hierarchs and kings
Who from your thrones pinnacled on the past
Sway the reluctant present, ye who sit
Pavilioned on the radiance or the gloom
Of mortal thought, which like an exhalation
Steaming from earth, conceals the of heaven
Which gave it birth, assemble here
Before your Father's throne; the swift decree
Yet hovers, and the fiery incarnation
Is yet withheld, clothèd in which it shall
annul
The fairest of those wandering isles that gem
The sapphire space of interstellar air,
That green and azure sphere, that earth enwrapped
Less in the beauty of its tender light
Than in an atmosphere of living spirit
Which interpenetrating all the . . .
it rolls from realm to realm
And age to age, and in its ebb and flow
Impels the generations
To their appointed place,
Whilst the high Arbiter
Beholds the strife, and at the appointed time
Sends His decrees veiled in eternal . . .

Within the circuit of this pendent orb
There lies an antique region, on which fell
The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn
Earliest and most benign, and from it sprung
Temples and cities and immortal forms
And harmonies of wisdom and of song,
And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair.
And when the sun of its dominion failed,
And when the winter of its glory came,
The winds that stripped it bare blew on and swept
That dew into the utmost wildernesses
In wandering clouds of sunny rain that thawed
The unmaternal bosom of the North.
Haste, sons of God, for ye beheld,
Reluctant, or consenting, or astonished,

---

8 your *Garnett*; yon *Forman, Dowden*.

The stern decrees go forth, which heaped on Greece
Ruin and degradation and despair.
A fourth now waits: assemble, sons of God,
To speed or to prevent or to suspend,
If, as ye dream, such power be not withheld,
The unaccomplished destiny.

. . . .

Chorus.

The curtain of the Universe
Is rent and shattered,
The splendour-wingèd worlds disperse
Like wild doves scattered.

Space is roofless and bare,
And in the midst a cloudy shrine,
Dark amid thrones of light.
In the blue glow of hyaline
Golden worlds revolve and shine.
In   flight
From every point of the Infinite,
Like a thousand dawns on a single night
The splendours rise and spread;
And through thunder and darkness dread
Light and music are radiated,
And in their pavilioned chariots led
By living wings high overhead
The giant Powers move,
Gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill.

. . . . . .

A chaos of light and motion
Upon that glassy ocean.

. . . . . .

The senate of the Gods is met,
Each in his rank and station set;
There is silence in the spaces—
Lo! Satan, Christ, and Mahomet
Start from their places!

Christ.   Almighty Father!
Low-kneeling at the feet of Destiny

. . . .

There are two fountains in which spirits weep
When mortals err, Discord and Slavery named,
And with their bitter dew two Destinies
Filled each their irrevocable urns; the third,
Fiercest and mightiest, mingled both, and added
Chaos and Death, and slow Oblivion's lymph,
And hate and terror, and the poisoned rain

. . . .

The Aurora of the nations. By this brow

Whose pores wept tears of blood, by these wide wounds,
By this imperial crown of agony,
By infamy and solitude and death,
For this I underwent, and by the pain
Of pity for those who would   for me
The unremembered joy of a revenge,
For this I felt—by Plato's sacred light,
Of which my spirit was a burning morrow—
By Greece and all she cannot cease to be,
Her quenchless words, sparks of immortal truth,
Stars of all night—her harmonies and forms,
Echoes and shadows of what Love adores
In thee, I do compel thee, send forth Fate,
Thy irrevocable child: let her descend,
A seraph-wingèd Victory [arrayed]
In tempest of the omnipotence of God
Which sweeps through all things.

From hollow leagues, from Tyranny which arms
Adverse miscreeds and emulous anarchies
To stamp, as on a wingèd serpent's seed,
Upon the name of Freedom; from the storm
Of faction, which like earthquake shakes and sickens
The solid heart of enterprise; from all
By which the holiest dreams of highest spirits
Are stars beneath the dawn . . .
                                        She shall arise
Victorious as the world arose from Chaos!
And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed
Their presence in the beauty and the light
Of Thy first smile, O Father,—as they gather
The spirit of Thy love which paves for them
Their path o'er the abyss, till every sphere
Shall be one living Spirit,—so shall Greece—
  Satan. Be as all things beneath the empyrean,
Mine! Art thou eyeless like old Destiny,
Thou mockery-king, crowned with a wreath of thorns?
Whose sceptre is a reed, the broken reed
Which pierces thee! whose throne a chair of scorn;
For seest thou not beneath this crystal floor
The innumerable worlds of golden light
Which are my empire, and the least of them
          which thou wouldst redeem from me?
Know'st thou not them my portion?
Or wouldst rekindle the   strife
Which our great Father then did arbitrate
Which he assigned to his competing sons
Each his apportioned realm?
                                        Thou Destiny,
Thou who art mailed in the omnipotence
Of Him who sends thee forth, whate'er thy task,

Speed, spare not to accomplish, and be mine
Thy trophies, whether Greece again become
The fountain in the desert whence the earth
Shall drink of freedom, which shall give it strength
To suffer, or a gulf of hollow death
To swallow all delight, all life, all hope.
Go, thou Vicegerent of my will, no less
Than of the Father's; but lest thou shouldst faint,
The wingèd hounds, Famine and Pestilence,
Shall wait on thee, the hundred-forkèd snake
Insatiate Superstition still shall . . .
The earth behind thy steps, and War shall hover
Above, and Fraud shall gape below, and Change
Shall flit before thee on her dragon wings,
Convulsing and consuming, and I add
Three vials of the tears which daemons weep
When virtuous spirits through the gate of Death
Pass triumphing over the thorns of life,
Sceptres and crowns, mitres and swords and snares,
Trampling in scorn, like Him and Socrates.
The first is Anarchy; when Power and Pleasure,
Glory and science and security,
On Freedom hang like fruit on the green tree,
Then pour it forth, and men shall gather ashes.
The second Tyranny—
Christ. Obdurate spirit!
Thou seest but the Past in the To-come.
Pride is thy error and thy punishment.
Boast not thine empire, dream not that thy worlds
Are more than furnace-sparks or rainbow-drops
Before the Power that wields and kindles them.
True greatness asks not space, true excellence
Lives in the Spirit of all things that live,
Which lends it to the worlds thou callest thine.

. . . .

Mahomet. . . . Haste thou and fill the waning crescent
With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow
Of Christian night rolled back upon the West,
When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph
From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow.

. . . .

Wake, thou Word
Of God, and from the throne of Destiny
Even to the utmost limit of thy way
May Triumph

. . . .

Be thou a curse on them whose creed
Divides and multiplies the most high God.

HELLAS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MAHMUD.	DAOOD.
HASSAN.	AHASUERUS, *a Jew.*

CHORUS *of Greek Captive Women.* *[The Phantom*[1] *of Mahomet II.]*
Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants. SCENE, *Constantinople.* TIME, *Sunset.*

SCENE.—*A Terrace on the Seraglio.* MAHMUD *sleeping, an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.*

Chorus of Greek Captive Women.

WE strew these opiate flowers
On thy restless pillow,—
They were stripped from Orient bowers,
By the Indian billow.
Be thy sleep
Calm and deep,
Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

Indian.

Away, unlovely dreams!
Away, false shapes of sleep!
Be his, as Heaven seems,
Clear, and bright, and deep!
Soft as love, and calm as death,
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

Chorus.

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden
With the soul of slumber;
It was sung by a Samian maiden,
Whose lover was of the number
Who now keep
That calm sleep
Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

Indian.

I touch thy temples pale!
I breathe my soul on thee!
And could my prayers avail,
All my joy should be
Dead, and I would live to weep,
So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

Chorus.

Breathe low, low
The spell of the mighty mistress now!
When Conscience lulls her sated snake,
And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.
Breathe low—low
The words which, like secret fire, shall flow
Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

---

[1] *Omitted, ed. 1822.*

Semichorus I.

Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not;
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

Semichorus II.

Yet were life a charnel where
Hope lay coffined with Despair;
Yet were truth a sacred lie,
Love were lust—

Semichorus I.

If Liberty
Lent not life its soul of light,
Hope its iris of delight,
Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
Love its power to give and bear.

Chorus.

In the great morning of the world,
The Spirit of God with might unfurled
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
  And all its banded anarchs fled,
Like vultures frighted from Imaus,
  Before an earthquake's tread.—
So from Time's tempestuous dawn
Freedom's splendour burst and shone:—
Thermopylae and Marathon
Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
  The springing Fire.—The wingèd glory
On Philippi half-alighted,
  Like an eagle on a promontory.
Its unwearied wings could fan
The quenchless ashes of Milan.
From age to age, from man to man,
  It lived; and lit from land to land
  Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell; and, as from night,
Reassuming fiery flight,
From the West swift Freedom came,
  Against the course of Heaven and doom,
A second sun arrayed in flame,
  To burn, to kindle, to illume.
From far Atlantis its young beams
Chased the shadows and the dreams.
France, with all her sanguine steams,
  Hid, but quenched it not; again
  Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
  From utmost Germany to Spain.

As an eagle fed with morning
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
When she seeks her aerie hanging
In the mountain-cedar's hair,
And her brood expect the clanging
Of her wings through the wild air,
Sick with famine:—Freedom, so
To what of Greece remaineth now
Returns; her hoary ruins glow
Like Orient mountains lost in day;
Beneath the safety of her wings
Her renovated nurslings prey,
And in the naked lightenings
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.
Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies,
A Desert, or a Paradise:
Let the beautiful and the brave
Share her glory, or a grave.

Semichorus I.

With the gifts of gladness
Greece did thy cradle strew;

Semichorus II.

With the tears of sadness
Greece did thy shroud bedew!

Semichorus I.

With an orphan's affection
She followed thy bier through Time;

Semichorus II.

And at thy resurrection
Reappeareth, like thou, sublime!

Semichorus I.

If Heaven should resume thee,
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

Semichorus II.

If Hell should entomb thee,
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

Semichorus I.

If Annihilation——

Semichorus II.

Dust let her glories be!
And a name and a nation
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

---

77 tempest's] tempests *ed. 1822*. 87 prey *ed. 1822*; play *edd. 1839*.

Indian.

His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not!
He starts—he shudders—ye that love not,
With your panting loud and fast,
Have awakened him at last.

Mahmud (*starting from his sleep*). Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate!
What! from a cannonade of three short hours?
'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus
Cannot be practicable yet—who stirs?
Stand to the match; that when the foe prevails
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin
The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower
Into the gap—wrench off the roof!
(*Enter* HASSAN.) Ha! what!
The truth of day lightens upon my dream
And I am Mahmud still.
Hassan. Your Sublime Highness
Is strangely moved.
Mahmud. The times do cast strange shadows
On those who watch and who must rule their course,
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
Be whelmed in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them.
Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me
As thus from sleep into the troubled day;
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.
Would that——no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
Of strange and secret and forgotten things.
I bade thee summon him:—'tis said his tribe
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.
Hassan. The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old
He seems to have outlived a world's decay;
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean
Seem younger still than he;—his hair and beard
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow;
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct
With light, and to the soul that quickens them
Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
To the winter wind:—but from his eye looks forth
A life of unconsumèd thought which pierces
The Present, and the Past, and the To-come.
Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery,
Mocked with the curse of immortality.
Some feign that he is Enoch: others dream
He was pre-adamite and has survived
Cycles of generation and of ruin.

The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence
And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
In years outstretched beyond the date of man,
May have attained to sovereignty and science
Over those strong and secret things and thoughts
Which others fear and know not.
Mahmud. I would talk
With this old Jew.
Hassan. Thy will is even now
Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern
'Mid the Demonesi. less accessible
Than thou or God! He who would question him
Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream
Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles,
When the young moon is westering as now,
And evening airs wander upon the wave;
And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,
Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow
Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water,
Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud
'Ahasuerus!' and the caverns round
Will answer 'Ahasuerus!' If his prayer
Be granted, a faint meteor will arise
Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,
And with the wind a storm of harmony
Unutterably sweet, and pilot him
Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:
Thence at the hour and place and circumstance
Fit for the matter of their conference
The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare
Win the desired communion—but that shout
Bodes—— [*A shout within.*
Mahmud. Evil, doubtless; like all human sounds.
Let me converse with spirits.
Hassan. That shout again.
Mahmud. This Jew whom thou hast summoned—
Hassan. Will be here—
Mahmud. When the omnipotent hour to which are yoked
He, I, and all things shall compel—enough!
Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew,
That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!
They weary me, and I have need of rest.
Kings are like stars—they rise and set, they have
The worship of the world, but no repose. [*Exeunt severally.*

Chorus.

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.

But they are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal
And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go;
New shapes they still may weave,
New gods, new laws receive,
Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror, came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light;
Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,
Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight;
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set:
While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are Paradise
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And Day peers forth with her blank eyes;
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The Powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem:
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;
Our hills and seas and streams,
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
Wailed for the golden years.

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, *and others.*

Mahmud. More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory,
And shall I sell it for defeat?
Daood. The Janizars
Clamour for pay.
Mahmud. Go! bid them pay themselves
With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins
Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?
No infidel children to impale on spears?
No hoary priests after that Patriarch

Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill,
Blood is the seed of gold.
Daood. It has been sown,
And yet the harvest to the sicklemen
Is as a grain to each.
Mahmud. Then, take this signet,
Unlock the seventh chamber in which lie
The treasures of victorious Solyman,—
An empire's spoil stored for a day of ruin.
O spirit of my sires! is it not come?
The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep;
But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,
Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;
Then, lead them to the rivers of fresh death. [*Exit* Daood.
O miserable dawn, after a night
More glorious than the day which it usurped!
O faith in God! O power on earth! O word
Of the great prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings
Darkened the thrones and idols of the West,
Now bright!—For thy sake cursèd be the hour,
Even as a father by an evil child,
When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph
From Caucasus to White Ceraunia!
Ruin above, and anarchy below;
Terror without, and treachery within;
The Chalice of destruction full, and all
Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares
To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?
Hassan. The lamp of our dominion still rides high;
One God is God—Mahomet is His prophet.
Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits
Of utmost Asia, irresistibly
Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry;
But not like them to weep their strength in tears:
They bear destroying lightning, and their step
Wakes earthquake to consume and overwhelm,
And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
With horrent arms; and lofty ships even now,
Like vapours anchored to a mountain's edge,
Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala
The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
Samos is drunk with blood;—the Greek has paid
Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far,
When the fierce shout of 'Allah-illa-Allah!'
Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind
Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock
Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.

253 spoil *ed. 1822*; spoils *edd. 1839*. 279 bear *ed. 1822*; have *edd. 1839*.

So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day!
If night is mute, yet the returning sun
Kindles the voices of the morning birds;
Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,
The Anarchies of Africa unleash
Their tempest-wingèd cities of the sea,
To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
Like sulphurous clouds, half-shattered by the storm,
They sweep the pale Aegean, while the Queen
Of Ocean, bound upon her island-throne,
Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons
Who frown on Freedom spare a smile for thee:
Russia still hovers, as an eagle might
Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
Hang tangled in inextricable fight,
To stoop upon the victor;—for she fears
The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine.
But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave
Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war
Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy,
And howl upon their limits; for they see
The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover,
Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood
Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,
Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes?
Our arsenals and our armouries are full;
Our forts defy assault; ten thousand cannon
Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour
Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;
The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale
The Christian merchant; and the yellow Jew
Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,
Over the hills of Anatolia,
Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry
Sweep;—the far flashing of their starry lances
Reverberates the dying light of day.
We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law;
But many-headed Insurrection stands
Divided in itself, and soon must fall.
Mahmud. Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable:
Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned
Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud
Which leads the rear of the departing day;
Wan emblem of an empire fading now!
See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent

322 assault *ed. 1822*; assaults *edd. 1839.*

Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
One star with insolent and victorious light
Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,
Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
Strikes its weak form to death.
Hassan. Even as that moon
Renews itself——
Mahmud. Shall we be not renewed!
Far other bark than ours were needed now
To stem the torrent of descending time:
The Spirit that lifts the slave before his lord
Stalks through the capitals of armèd kings,
And spreads his ensign in the wilderness:
Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls,
Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust;
And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts
When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear
Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.
What were Defeat when Victory must appal?
Or Danger, when Security looks pale?—
How said the messenger—who, from the fort
Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle
Of Bucharest?—that—
Hassan. Ibrahim's scimitar
Drew with its gleam swift victory from Heaven,
To burn before him in the night of battle—
A light and a destruction.
Mahmud. Ay! the day
Was ours: but how?——
Hassan. The light Wallachians,
The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies
Fled from the glance of our artillery
Almost before the thunderstone alit.
One half the Grecian army made a bridge
Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead;
The other—
Mahmud. Speak—tremble not.—
Hassan. Islanded
By victor myriads, formed in hollow square
With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
The deluge of our foaming cavalry;
Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
Our baffled army trembled like one man
Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,
From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
Kneading them down with fire and iron rain:
Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn
Under the hook of the swart sickleman,
The band, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,

351 his *ed. 1822*; its *edd. 1839.* 356 of the earth *ed. 1822*; of earth *edd. 1839.* 384 band *ed. 1822*; bands *edd. 1839.*

Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, 'Slaves,
Render yourselves—they have abandoned you—
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?
We grant your lives.' 'Grant that which is thine own!'
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!
Another—'God, and man, and hope abandon me;
But I to them, and to myself, remain
Constant:'—he bowed his head, and his heart burst.
A third exclaimed, 'There is a refuge, tyrant,
Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm
Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again.'
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!
So these survivors, each by different ways,
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,
Met in triumphant death; and when our army
Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame
Held back the base hyaenas of the battle
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
One rose out of the chaos of the slain:
And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
Of the old saviours of the land we rule
Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;—
Or if there burned within the dying man
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith
Creating what it feigned;—I cannot tell—
But he cried, 'Phantoms of the free, we come!
Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
And thaw their frostwork diadems like dew;—
O ye who float around this clime, and weave
The garment of the glory which it wears,
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,
Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;—
Progenitors of all that yet is great,
Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept
In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!
And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale
When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread,
The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still
They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.
The exhalations and the thirsty winds
Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death;
Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter: thus, where'er
Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
Of these dead limbs,—upon your streams and mountains,

Upon your fields, your gardens, and your housetops,
Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
With poisoned light—Famine, and Pestilence,
And Panic, shall wage war upon our side!
Nature from all her boundaries is moved
Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam.
The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake
Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
On this one cast;—but ere the die be thrown,
The renovated genius of our race,
Proud umpire of the impious game, descends,
A seraph-wingèd Victory, bestriding
The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,
And you to oblivion!'—More he would have said,
But—
  Mahmud. Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
Their ruin in the hues of our success.
A rebel's crime, gilt with a rebel's tongue!
Your heart is Greek, Hassan.
  Hassan. It may be so:
A spirit not my own wrenched me within,
And I have spoken words I fear and hate;
Yet would I die for—
  Mahmud. Live! oh live! outlive
Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet—
  Hassan. Alas!——
  Mahmud. The fleet which, like a flock of clouds
Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner!
Our wingèd castles from their merchant ships!
Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!
Our arms before their chains! our years of empire
Before their centuries of servile fear!
Death is awake! Repulse is on the waters!
They own no more the thunder-bearing banner
Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,
Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.
  Hassan. Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae saw
The wreck——
  Mahmud. The caves of the Icarian isles
Told each to the other in loud mockery,
And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes,
First of the sea-convulsing fight—and, then,—
Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains:
Interpret thou their voice!
  Hassan. My presence bore
A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
Bore down at daybreak from the North, and hung

466 Repulse is *Shelley, Errata, ed. 1822*; Repulsed *ed. 1822*. 472 Told *Errata, Wms. transcript*; Hold *ed. 1822*.

As multitudinous on the ocean line,
As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.
Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
Was kindled.—
First through the hail of our artillery
The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail
Dashed:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
To man were grappled in the embrace of war,
Inextricable but by death or victory.
The tempest of the raging fight convulsed
To its crystàlline depths that stainless sea,
And shook Heaven's roof of golden morning clouds,
Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.
In the brief trances of the artillery
One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer
Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapped
The unforeseen event, till the north wind
Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory!
For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon
The abhorrèd cross glimmered behind, before,
Among, around us; and that fatal sign
Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts,
As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!—
Our noonday path over the sanguine foam
Was beaconed,—and the glare struck the sun pale,—
By our consuming transports: the fierce light
Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
The ravening fire, even to the water's level;
Some were blown up; some, settling heavily,
Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died
Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,
Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished!
We met the vultures legioned in the air
Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind;
They, screaming from their cloudy mountain-peaks,
Stooped through the sulphurous battle-smoke and perched
Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,
Like its ill angel or its damnèd soul,
Riding upon the bosom of the sea.
We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,
And ravening Famine left his ocean cave
To dwell with War, with us, and with Despair.
We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
And with night, tempest——

Mahmud. Cease!

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503 in *ed. 1822*; of *edd. 1839*. 527 And *ed. 1822*; As *edd. 1839*.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Your Sublime Highness,
That Christian hound, the Muscovite Ambassador,
Has left the city.—If the rebel fleet
Had anchored in the port, had victory
Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,
Panic were tamer.—Obedience and Mutiny,
Like giants in contention planet-struck,
Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace
In Stamboul.—
Mahmud. Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine.
Hassan. Fear not the Russian:
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,
And must be paid for his reserve in blood.
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves!

Enter second Messenger.

Second Messenger. Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,
Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,
Corinth, and Thebes are carried by assault,
And every Islamite who made his dogs
Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves
Passed at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood,
Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death;
But like a fiery plague breaks out anew
In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale
In its own light. The garrison of Patras
Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
But from the Briton: at once slave and tyrant,
His wishes still are weaker than his fears,
Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway;
And if you buy him not, your treasury
Is empty even of promises—his own coin.
The freedman of a western poet-chief
Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,
And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont:
The agèd Ali sits in Yanina
A crownless metaphor of empire:
His name, that shadow of his withered might,
Holds our besieging army like a spell
In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny;

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563 freedman *ed. 1822*; freeman *edd. 1839.*

He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth
Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
The ruins of the city where he reigned
Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped
The costly harvest his own blood matured,
Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce
From Ypsilanti with ten camel-loads
Of Indian gold.

Enter a third Messenger.

Mahmud. What more?
Third Messenger. The Christian tribes
Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
Are in revolt;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo
Tremble;—the Arab menaces Medina,
The Aethiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar,
And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed,
Who denies homage, claims investiture
As price of tardy aid. Persia demands
The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,
Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins
Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,
Shake in the general fever. Through the city,
Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,
And prophesyings horrible and new
Are heard among the crowd: that sea of men
Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
A Dervise, learnèd in the Koran, preaches
That it is written how the sins of Islam
Must raise up a destroyer even now.
The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West,
Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,
But in the omnipresence of that Spirit
In which all live and are. Ominous signs
Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky:
One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun;
It has rained blood; and monstrous births declare
The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.
The army encamped upon the Cydaris
Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,
The shadows doubtless of the unborn time
Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet
The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
At the third watch the Spirit of the Plague
Was heard abroad flapping among the tents;
Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.
The last news from the camp is, that a thousand
Have sickened, and——

Enter a fourth Messenger.

Mahmud. And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
Of some untimely rumour, speak!
Fourth Messenger. One comes
Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood:
He stood, he says, on Chelonites'
Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan
Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters
Then trembling in the splendour of the moon,
When as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid
Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets
Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,
Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
And smoke which strangled every infant wind
That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.
At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco
Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse
He saw, or dreamed he saw, the Turkish admiral
And two the loftiest of our ships of war.
With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven,
Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed;
And the abhorrèd cross—

Enter an Attendant.

Attendant. Your Sublime Highness,
The Jew, who——
Mahmud. Could not come more seasonably:
Bid him attend. I'll hear no more! too long
We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,
And multiply upon our shattered hopes
The images of ruin. Come what will!
To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
Set in our path to light us to the edge
Through rough and smooth, nor can we suffer aught
Which He inflicts not in whose hand we are. [*Exeunt.*

Semichorus I.

Would I were the wingèd cloud
Of a tempest swift and loud!
I would scorn
The smile of morn
And the wave where the moonrise is born!
I would leave
The spirits of eve
A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave
From other threads than mine!
Bask in the deep blue noon divine.
Who would? Not I.

620 on Chelonites'] on Chelonites *Errata*; upon Clelonite's *ed. 1822*; upon Clelonit's *edd. 1839*. 657 the deep blue *Errata, Wms. transcript*; the blue *ed. 1822*.

Semichorus II.

Whither to fly?

Semichorus I.

Where the rocks that gird th' Aegean
Echo to the battle paean
Of the free—
I would flee
A tempestuous herald of victory!
My golden rain
For the Grecian slain
Should mingle in tears with the bloody main,
And my solemn thunder-knell
Should ring to the world the passing-bell
Of Tyranny!

Semichorus II.

Ah king! wilt thou chain
The rack and the rain?
Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?
The storms are free,
But we—

Chorus.

O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,
Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!
Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,
These brows thy branding garland bear,
But the free heart, the impassive soul
Scorn thy control!

Semichorus I.

Let there be light! said Liberty,
And like sunrise from the sea,
Athens arose!—Around her born,
Shone like mountains in the morn
Glorious states;—and are they now
Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

Semichorus II.

Go,
Where Thermae and Asopus swallowed
Persia, as the sand does foam;
Deluge upon deluge followed,
Discord, Macedon, and Rome:
And lastly thou!

Semichorus I.

Temples and towers,
Citadels and marts, and they
Who live and die there, have been ours,
And may be thine, and must decay;

But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystàlline sea
Of thought and its eternity;
Her citizens, imperial spirits,
Rule the present from the past,
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set.

Semichorus II.

Hear ye the blast,
Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
From ruin her Titanian walls?
Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones
Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete
Hear, and from their mountain thrones
The daemons and the nymphs repeat
The harmony.

Semichorus I.

I hear! I hear!

Semichorus II.

The world's eyeless charioteer,
Destiny, is hurrying by!
What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds
Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
What eagle-wingèd victory sits
At her right hand? what shadow flits
Before? what splendour rolls behind?
Ruin and renovation cry
'Who but We?'

Semichorus I.

I hear! I hear!
The hiss as of a rushing wind,
The roar as of an ocean foaming,
The thunder as of earthquake coming.
I hear! I hear!
The crash as of an empire falling,
The shrieks as of a people calling
'Mercy! mercy!'—How they thrill!
Then a shout of 'kill! kill! kill!'
And then a small still voice, thus—

Semichorus II.

For
Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,
The foul cubs like their parents are,
Their den is in the guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with despair.

728 For *ed. 1822, Wms. transcript*; Fear *cj. Fleay, Forman, Dowden. See Editor's Note.*

Semichorus I.

In sacred Athens, near the fane
Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood:
Serve not the unknown God in vain,
But pay that broken shrine again,
Love for hate and tears for blood.

Enter Mahmud *and* Ahasuerus.

Mahmud. Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we.
Ahasuerus. No more!
Mahmud. But raised above thy fellow-men
By thought, as I by power.
Ahasuerus. Thou sayest so.
Mahmud. Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;
Thou severest element from element;
Thy spirit is present in the Past, and sees
The birth of this old world through all its cycles
Of desolation and of loveliness,
And when man was not, and how man became
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
And all its narrow circles—it is much—
I honour thee, and would be what thou art
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
Mighty or wise. I apprehended not
What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
Can make the Future present—let it come!
Moreover thou disdainest us and ours;
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.
Ahasuerus. Disdain thee?—not the worm beneath thy feet!
The Fathomless has care for meaner things
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
Who would be what they may not, or would seem
That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more
Of thee and me, the Future and the Past;
But look on that which cannot change—the One,
The unborn and the undying. Earth and ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,
With all its cressets of immortal fire,
Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole
Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,

762 thy *ed. 1822*; my *edd. 1839.*

With all the silent or tempestuous workings
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,
Is but a vision;—all that it inherits
Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams;
Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
The Future and the Past are idle shadows
Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being:
Nought is but that which feels itself to be.
Mahmud. What meanest thou? Thy words stream like a tempest
Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake
The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
On Heaven above me. What can they avail?
They cast on all things surest, brightest, best,
Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.
Ahasuerus. Mistake me not! All is contained in each.
Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup
Is that which has been, or will be, to that
Which is—the absent to the present. Thought
Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are, what that which they regard appears,
The stuff whence mutability can weave
All that it hath dominion o'er, worlds, worms,
Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
To do with time, or place, or circumstance?
Wouldst thou behold the Future?—ask and have!
Knock and it shall be opened—look, and lo!
The coming age is shadowed on the Past
As on a glass.
Mahmud. Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second
Win Stamboul?
Ahasuerus. Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit
The written fortunes of thy house and faith.
Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell
How what was born in blood must die.
Mahmud. Thy words
Have power on me! I see——
Ahasuerus. What hearest thou?
Mahmud. A far whisper——
Terrible silence.
Ahasuerus. What succeeds?
Mahmud. The sound
As of the assault of an imperial city,
The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
The roar of giant cannon; the earthquaking
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,
The clash of wheels, and clang of armèd hoofs,
And crash of brazen mail as of the wreck

Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
The shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,
As of a joyous infant waked and playing
With its dead mother's breast, and now more loud
The mingled battle-cry,—ha! hear I not
‘Ἐν τούτῳ νίκη!’ ‘Allah-illa-Allah!’?
Ahasuerus. The sulphurous mist is raised—thou seest—
Mahmud. A chasm,
As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;
And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
Like giants on the ruins of a world,
Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one
Of regal port has cast himself beneath
The stream of war. Another proudly clad
In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb
Into the gap, and with his iron mace
Directs the torrent of that tide of men,
And seems—he is—Mahomet!
Ahasuerus. What thou seest
Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream.
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold
How cities, on which Empire sleeps enthroned,
Bow their towered crests to mutability.
Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power
Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,
Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished
With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes
Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past
Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with
That portion of thyself which was ere thou
Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death,
Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion
Which called it from the uncreated deep,
Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms
Of raging death; and draw with mighty will
The imperial shade hither. [*Exit* AHASUERUS. *The Phantom of* MAHOMET THE SECOND *appears.*
Mahmud. Approach!
Phantom. I come
Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
To take the living than give up the dead;
Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here.
The heavy fragments of the power which fell
When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices

Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
Wailing for glory never to return.—
  A later Empire nods in its decay:
The autumn of a greener faith is come,
And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip
The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
Her aerie, while Dominion whelped below.
The storm is in its branches, and the frost
Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
Ruin on ruin:—Thou art slow, my son;
The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep
A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies
Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,
Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life,
The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—
Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,
And hopes that sate themselves on dust, and die!—
Stripped of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.
Islam must fall, but we will reign together
Over its ruins in the world of death:—
And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
Unfold itself even in the shape of that
Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe!
To the weak people tangled in the grasp
Of its last spasms.
  Mahmud. Spirit, woe to all!
Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe
To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed!
Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!
Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!
Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;
Those who are born and those who die! but say,
Imperial shadow of the thing I am,
When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
Her consummation!
  Phantom. Ask the cold pale Hour,
Rich in reversion of impending death,
When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe gray hairs
Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmity—
The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years,
Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
Over the heads of men, under which burthen
They bow themselves unto the grave: fond wretch!
He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years
To come, and how in hours of youth renewed
He will renew lost joys, and——
  Voice without. Victory! Victory!
[*The Phantom vanishes.*
  Mahmud. What sound of the importunate earth has broken
My mighty trance?

Voice without. Victory! Victory!
Mahmud. Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile
Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response
Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live?
Were there such things, or may the unquiet brain,
Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear?
It matters not!—for nought we see or dream,
Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,
The Future must become the Past, and I
As they were to whom once this present hour,
This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy
Never to be attained.—I must rebuke
This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,
And dying, bring despair. Victory! poor slaves!
[*Exit* MAHMUD.
Voice without. Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks
Are as a brood of lions in the net
Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death,
From Thule to the girdle of the world,
Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men;
The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,
Famine and Thirst await! eat, drink, and die!

Semichorus I.

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,
Salutes the rising sun, pursues the flying day!
I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay
In visions of the dawning undelight.
Who shall impede her flight?
Who rob her of her prey?

Voice without. Victory! Victory! Russia's famished eagles
Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!
Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

Semichorus II.

Thou voice which art
The herald of the ill in splendour hid!
Thou echo of the hollow heart
Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode
When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed:
Oh, bear me to those isles of jaggèd cloud
Which float like mountains on the earthquake, mid

958 earthquake *ed. 1822*; earthquakes *edd. 1839*.

The momentary oceans of the lightning,
Or to some toppling promontory proud
Of solid tempest whose black pyramid,
Riven, overhangs the founts intensely bright'ning
Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire
Before their waves expire,
When heaven and earth are light, and only light
In the thunder-night!

Voice without. Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.
Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes,
These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners
Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

Semichorus I.

Alas! for Liberty!
If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,
Or fate, can quell the free!
Alas! for Virtue, when
Torments, or contumely, or the sneers
Of erring judging men
Can break the heart where it abides.
Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid,
Can change with its false times and tides,
Like hope and terror,—
Alas for Love!
And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,
If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror
Before the dazzled eyes of Error,
Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

Semichorus II.

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,
Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn
Through many an hostile Anarchy!
At length they wept aloud, and cried, 'The Sea! the Sea!'
Through exile, persecution, and despair,
Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become
The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb
Of all whose step wakes Power lulled in her savage lair:
But Greece was as a hermit-child,
Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
To woman's growth, by dreams so mild,
She knew not pain or guilt;
And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble
When ye desert the free—
If Greece must be
A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,
And build themselves again impregnably

In a diviner clime,
To Amphionic music on some Cape sublime,
Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

Semichorus I.

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;
Let the free possess the Paradise they claim;
Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed
With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

Semichorus II.

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,
Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,
Our adversity a dream to pass away—
Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!

Voice without. Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends
The keys of ocean to the Islamite.—
Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled,
And British skill directing Othman might,
Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh, keep holy
This jubilee of unrevengèd blood!
Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

Semichorus I.

Darkness has dawned in the East
On the noon of time:
The death-birds descend to their feast
From the hungry clime.
Let Freedom and Peace flee far
To a sunnier strand,
And follow Love's folding-star
To the Evening land!

Semichorus II.

The young moon has fed
Her exhausted horn
With the sunset's fire:
The weak day is dead,
But the night is not born;
And, like loveliness panting with wild desire
While it trembles with fear and delight,
Hesperus flies from awakening night,
And pants in its beauty and speed with light
Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.
Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!
Guide us far, far away,
To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day
Thou art hidden
From waves on which weary Noon
Faints in her summer swoon,
Between kingless continents sinless as Eden,
Around mountains and islands inviolably
Pranked on the sapphire sea.

Semichorus I.

Through the sunset of hope,
Like the shapes of a dream,
What Paradise islands of glory gleam!
Beneath Heaven's cope,
Their shadows more clear float by—
The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe
Burst, like morning on dream, or like Heaven on death,
Through the walls of our prison;
And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

Chorus.

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free:
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendour of its prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose
Shall burst, more bright and good

1057 dream *ed. 1822*; dreams *edd. 1839*. 1068 his *ed. 1822*; its *edd. 1839*. 1072 Argo] Argos *ed. 1822*. 1091–3 *See Editor's Note*. 1091 bright *edd. 1839*; wise *ed. 1829* (*ed. Galignani*).

Than all who fell, than One who rose,
  Than many unsubdued:
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
  Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
  Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last!

NOTES

(1) *The quenchless ashes of Milan* [l. 60, p. 449].

Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. See Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

(2) *The Chorus* [p. 452].

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, *clothe themselves in matter*, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatise upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of His nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain: meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

1093 unsubdued *edd. 1839*; unwithstood *ed. 1829* (*ed. Galignani*).

(3) *No hoary priests after that Patriarch* [l. 245, p. 453].

The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe. As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

(4) *The freedman of a western poet-chief* [l. 563, p. 460].

A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness whose connection with our character is determined by events.

(5) *The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west* [l. 598, p. 461].

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a seaport near Lacedaemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

(6) *The sound as of the assault of an imperial city* [ll. 814–15, p. 517].

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1453, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as over subtle. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

(7) *The Chorus* [p. 472].

The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, etc., may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age, but to anticipate however darkly a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader '*magno nec* proximus intervallo' of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the '*lion shall lie down with the lamb*,' and 'omnis feret omnia tellus.' Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

(8) *Saturn and Love their long repose shall burst* [l. 1090, p. 472].

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All* those *who fell*, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the *One who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing, activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a Power, who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by His sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to His innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

NOTE ON HELLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

The South of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy; secret societies were formed; and, when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundusium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821 the Austrians poured their armies into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the *congé* to their sovereign, and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said that the Austrian minister presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, urging their imprisonment; and the Grand Duke replied, 'I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know, if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up.' But, though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred for the Austrian was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

We have seen the rise and progress of reform. But the Holy Alliance was alive and active in those days, and few could dream of the peaceful triumph of liberty. It seemed then that the armed assertion of freedom in the South of Europe was the only hope of the liberals, as, if it prevailed, the nations of the north would imitate the example. Happily the reverse has proved the fact. The countries accustomed to the exercise of the privileges of freemen, to a limited extent, have extended, and are extending, these limits. Freedom and knowledge have now a chance of proceeding hand in hand; and, if it continue thus, we may hope for the durability of both. Then, as I have said—in 1821—Shelley, as well as every other lover of liberty, looked upon the struggles in Spain and Italy as decisive of the destinies of the world, probably for centuries to come. The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense. When Genoa declared itself free, his hopes were at their highest. Day after day he read the bulletins of the Austrian army, and sought eagerly to gather tokens of its defeat. He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport. His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of the cause. We were living at Pisa at that time; and several well-informed Italians, at the head of whom we may place the celebrated Vaccà, were accustomed to seek for sympathy in their hopes from Shelley: they did not find such for the despair they too generally experienced, founded on contempt for their southern countrymen.

While the fate of the progress of the Austrian armies then invading Naples was yet in suspense, the news of another revolution filled him with exultation. We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradja, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia; who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his viceroyalty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman to whom the drama of *Hellas* is dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April 1821, he called on Shelley, bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ypsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

Shelley had hymned the dawn of liberty in Spain and Naples, in two odes dictated by the warmest enthusiasm; he felt himself naturally impelled to decorate with poetry the uprise of the descendants of that people whose works he regarded with deep admiration, and to adopt the vaticinatory character in prophesying their success. *Hellas* was written in a moment of enthusiasm. It is curious to remark how well he overcomes the difficulty of forming a drama out of such scant materials. His prophecies, indeed, came true in their general, not their particular, purport. He did not foresee the death of Lord Londonderry, which was to be the epoch of a change in English politics, particularly as regarded foreign affairs; nor that the navy of his country would fight for instead of against the Greeks, and by the battle of Navarino secure their enfranchisement from the Turks. Almost against reason, as it appeared to him, he resolved to believe that Greece would prove triumphant; and in this spirit, auguring ultimate good, yet grieving over the vicissitudes to be endured in the interval, he composed his drama.

Hellas was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato:—

'But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystàlline sea
Of thought and its eternity.'

And again, that philosophical truth felicitously imaged forth—

'Revenge and Wrong bring forth
their kind,
The foul cubs like their parents
are,
Their den is in the guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with
despair.'

The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics. The imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the Regeneration of Mankind—and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value.

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA

[Published in part (ll. 1–69, 100–120) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; and again, with the notes, in *P. W.*, 1839. Lines 127–238 were printed by Dr. Garnett under the title of *The Magic Plant* in his *Relics of Shelley*, 1862. The whole was edited in its present form from the Boscombe MS. by Mr. W. M. Rossetti in 1870 (*Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.*, Moxon, 2 vols.). 'Written at Pisa during the late winter or early spring of 1822' (Garnett).]

The following fragments are part of a Drama undertaken for the amusement of the individuals who composed our intimate society, but left unfinished. I have preserved a sketch of the story as far as it had been shadowed in the poet's mind.

An Enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a Pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the Enchanted Island, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her Island.—[Mrs. Shelley's Note, 1839.]

Scene.—*Before the Cavern of the Indian Enchantress.*
The Enchantress *comes forth.*

Enchantress.

He came like a dream in the dawn of life,
He fled like a shadow before its noon;
He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife,
And I wander and wane like the weary moon.
O, sweet Echo, wake, 5
And for my sake
Make answer the while my heart shall break!

But my heart has a music which Echo's lips,
Though tender and true, yet can answer not,
And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse
Can return not the kiss by his now forgot;
Sweet lips! he who hath
On my desolate path
Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!

The Enchantress *makes her spell: she is answered by a Spirit.*

Spirit. Within the silent centre of the earth
My mansion is; where I have lived insphered
From the beginning, and around my sleep
Have woven all the wondrous imagery
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
Infinite depths of unknown elements
Massed into one impenetrable mask;
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
Of gold and stone, and adamantine iron.
And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
In the dark space of interstellar air.

A good Spirit, who watches over the Pirate's fate, leads, in a mysterious manner, the lady of his love to the Enchanted Isle. She is accompanied by a Youth, who loves the lady, but whose passion she returns only with a sisterly affection. The ensuing scene takes place between them on their arrival at the Isle. [Mrs. Shelley's Note, 1839.]

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8 my *omitted 1824.* 15–27 Within . . . air. *1839; omitted 1824. See these lines in* '*Posthumous Poems,*' *1824, p. 209*: '*Song of a Spirit.*' 16 have *1839; omitted 1824, p. 209.* 25 seas, and waves *1824, p. 209*; seas, waves *1839.*

ANOTHER SCENE

Indian Youth *and* Lady.

Indian. And, if my grief should still be dearer to me
Than all the pleasures in the world beside,
Why would you lighten it?—
Lady. I offer only
That which I seek, some human sympathy
In this mysterious island.
Indian. Oh! my friend,
My sister, my beloved!—What do I say?
My brain is dizzy, and I scarce know whether
I speak to thee or her.
Lady. Peace, perturbed heart!
I am to thee only as thou to mine,
The passing wind which heals the brow at noon,
And may strike cold into the breast at night,
Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most,
Or long soothe could it linger.
Indian. But you said
You also loved?
Lady. Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks
This word of love is fit for all the world,
And that for gentle hearts another name
Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.
I have loved.
Indian. And thou lovest not? if so,
Young as thou art thou canst afford to weep.
Lady. Oh! would that I could claim exemption
From all the bitterness of that sweet name.
I loved, I love, and when I love no more
Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair
To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,
The embodied vision of the brightest dream,
Which like a dawn heralds the day of life;
The shadow of his presence made my world
A Paradise. All familiar things he touched,
All common words he spoke, became to me
Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.
He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,
As terrible and lovely as a tempest;
He came, and went, and left me what I am.
Alas! Why must I think how oft we two
Have sate together near the river springs,
Under the green pavilion which the willow
Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,
Strewn, by the nurslings that linger there,
Over that islet paved with flowers and moss,
While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Showered on us, and the dove mourned in the pine,

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29 pleasures] pleasure *1824*. 32-41 *Assigned to* Indian, *1824*.

Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own?
The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt,
And the false cuckoo bade the spray good morn;
And on a wintry bough the widowed bird
Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves,
Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow.
I, left like her, and leaving one like her,
Alike abandoned and abandoning
(Oh! unlike her in this!) the gentlest youth,
Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him,
Even as my sorrow made his love to me!
Indian. One curse of Nature stamps in the same mould
The features of the wretched; and they are
As like as violet to violet,
When memory, the ghost, their odours keeps
Mid the cold relics of abandoned joy.—
Proceed.
Lady. He was a simple innocent boy.
I loved him well, but not as he desired;
Yet even thus he was content to be:—
A short content, for I was——
Indian [*aside*]. God of Heaven!
From such an islet, such a river-spring——!
I dare not ask her if there stood upon it
A pleasure-dome surmounted by a crescent,
With steps to the blue water. [*Aloud.*] It may be
That Nature masks in life several copies
Of the same lot, so that the sufferers
May feel another's sorrow as their own,
And find in friendship what they lost in love.
That cannot be: yet it is strange that we,
From the same scene, by the same path to this
Realm of abandonment—— But speak! your breath—
Your breath is like soft music, your words are
The echoes of a voice which on my heart
Sleeps like a melody of early days.
But as you said——
Lady. He was so awful, yet
So beautiful in mystery and terror,
Calming me as the loveliness of heaven
Soothes the unquiet sea:—and yet not so,
For he seemed stormy, and would often seem
A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds;
For such his thoughts, and even his actions were;
But he was not of them, nor they of him,
But as they hid his splendour from the earth.
Some said he was a man of blood and peril,
And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips.
More need was there I should be innocent,
More need that I should be most true and kind,

71 spray *Rossetti 1870*, *Woodberry*; Spring *Forman*, *Dowden*.

And much more need that there should be found one
To share remorse and scorn and solitude,
And all the ills that wait on those who do
The tasks of ruin in the world of life.
He fled, and I have followed him.
Indian. Such a one
Is he who was the winter of my peace.
But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart
From the far hills where rise the springs of India?
How didst thou pass the intervening sea?
Lady. If I be sure I am not dreaming now,
I should not doubt to say it was a dream.
Methought a star came down from heaven,
And rested mid the plants of India,
Which I had given a shelter from the frost
Within my chamber. There the meteor lay,
Panting forth light among the leaves and flowers,
As if it lived, and was outworn with speed;
Or that it loved, and passion made the pulse
Of its bright life throb like an anxious heart,
Till it diffused itself, and all the chamber
And walls seemed melted into emerald fire
That burned not; in the midst of which appeared
A spirit like a child, and laughed aloud
A thrilling peal of such sweet merriment
As made the blood tingle in my warm feet:
Then bent over a vase, and murmuring
Low, unintelligible melodies,
Placed something in the mould like melon-seeds,
And slowly faded, and in place of it
A soft hand issued from the veil of fire,
Holding a cup like a magnolia flower,
And poured upon the earth within the vase
The element with which it overflowed,
Brighter than morning light, and purer than
The water of the springs of Himalah.
Indian. You waked not?
Lady. Not until my dream became
Like a child's legend on the tideless sand,
Which the first foam erases half, and half
Leaves legible. At length I rose, and went,
Visiting my flowers from pot to pot, and thought
To set new cuttings in the empty urns,
And when I came to that beside the lattice,
I saw two little dark-green leaves
Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then
I half-remembered my forgotten dream.
And day by day, green as a gourd in June,
The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew
What plant it was; its stem and tendrils seemed

120–6 Such . . . dream *1839*; *omitted 1824*.

Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded
With azure mail and streaks of woven silver;
And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds
Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,
Until the golden eye of the bright flower,
Through the dark lashes of those veinèd lids,
. . . disencumbered of their silent sleep,
Gazed like a star into the morning light.
Its leaves were delicate, you almost saw
The pulses
With which the purple velvet flower was fed
To overflow, and like a poet's heart
Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment,
Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell,
And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit
Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day
I nursed the plant, and on the double flute
Played to it on the sunny winter days
Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain
On silent leaves, and sang those words in which
Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings;
And I would send tales of forgotten love
Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs
Of maids deserted in the olden time,
And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom
Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant,
So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come,
And crept abroad into the moonlight air,
And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon,
The sun averted less his oblique beam.
Indian. And the plant died not in the frost?
Lady. It grew;
And went out of the lattice which I left
Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires
Along the garden and across the lawn,
And down the slope of moss and through the tufts
Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown
With simple lichens, and old hoary stones,
On to the margin of the glassy pool,
Even to a nook of unblown violets
And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn,
Under a pine with ivy overgrown.
And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard
Under the shadows; but when Spring indeed
Came to unswathe her infants, and the lilies
Peeped from their bright green masks to wonder at
This shape of autumn couched in their recess,
Then it dilated, and it grew until
One half lay floating on the fountain wave,
Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies,
Kept time

Among the snowy water-lily buds.
Its shape was such as summer melody
Of the south wind in spicy vales might give
To some light cloud bound from the golden dawn
To fairy isles of evening, and it seemed
In hue and form that it had been a mirror
Of all the hues and forms around it and
Upon it pictured by the sunny beams
Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool,
Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof
Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems
Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections
Of every infant flower and star of moss
And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.
And thus it lay in the Elysian calm
Of its own beauty, floating on the line
Which, like a film in purest space, divided
The heaven beneath the water from the heaven
Above the clouds; and every day I went
Watching its growth and wondering;
And as the day grew hot, methought I saw
A glassy vapour dancing on the pool,
And on it little quaint and filmy shapes,
With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall,
Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.

. . . .

O friend, sleep was a veil uplift from Heaven—
As if Heaven dawned upon the world of dream—
When darkness rose on the extinguished day
Out of the eastern wilderness.
Indian. I too
Have found a moment's paradise in sleep
Half compensate a hell of waking sorrow.

CHARLES THE FIRST

[*Charles the First* was designed in 1818, begun towards the close of 1819 [Medwin, *Life*, ii. p. 62], resumed in January, and finally laid aside by June, 1822. It was published in part in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and printed, in its present form (with the addition of some 530 lines), by Mr. W. M. Rossetti, 1870. Further particulars are given in the Editor's Notes at the end of the volume.]

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

King Charles I.
Queen Henrietta.
Laud, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*
Wentworth, *Earl of Strafford.*
Lord Cottington.
Lord Weston.
Lord Coventry.
Williams, *Bishop of Lincoln.*
Secretary Lyttelton.
Juxon.
St. John.
Archy, *the Court Fool.*
Hampden.
Pym.
Cromwell.
Cromwell's Daughter.
Sir Harry Vane *the younger.*
Leighton.
Bastwick.
Prynne.

Gentlemen of the Inns of Court, Citizens, Pursuivants, Marshalsmen, Law Students, Judges, Clerk.

Scene I.—*The Masque of the Inns of Court.*

A Pursuivant. Place, for the Marshal of the Masque!
First Citizen. What thinkest thou of this quaint masque which turns,
Like morning from the shadow of the night,
The night to day, and London to a place
Of peace and joy?
Second Citizen. And Hell to Heaven.
Eight years are gone,
And they seem hours, since in this populous street
I trod on grass made green by summer's rain,
For the red plague kept state within that palace
Where now that vanity reigns. In nine years more
The roots will be refreshed with civil blood;
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven
That sin and wrongs wound, as an orphan's cry,
The patience of the great Avenger's ear.
A Youth. Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see,
Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden
By God or man;—'tis like the bright procession
Of skiey visions in a solemn dream
From which men wake as from a Paradise,
And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life.
If God be good, wherefore should this be evil?
And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw
Unseasonable poison from the flowers

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10 now that vanity reigns *1870*; now reigns vanity *1824.*

Which bloom so rarely in this barren world?
Oh, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present
Dark as the future!—

. . . .

When Avarice and Tyranny, vigilant Fear,
And open-eyed Conspiracy lie sleeping
As on Hell's threshold; and all gentle thoughts
Waken to worship Him who giveth joys
With His own gift.
Second Citizen. How young art thou in this old age of time!
How green in this gray world? Canst thou discern
The signs of seasons, yet perceive no hint
Of change in that stage-scene in which thou art
Not a spectator but an actor? or
Art thou a puppet moved by [enginery]?
The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done,—
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found
My inn of lasting rest; but thou must still
Be journeying on in this inclement air.
Wrap thy old cloak about thy back;
Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road,
Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust,
For the violet paths of pleasure. This Charles the First
Rose like the equinoctial sun, . . .
By vapours, through whose threatening ominous veil
Darting his altered influence he has gained
This height of noon—from which he must decline
Amid the darkness of conflicting storms,
To dank extinction and to latest night . . .
There goes
The apostate Strafford; he whose titles
whispered aphorisms
From Machiavel and Bacon: and, if Judas
Had been as brazen and as bold as he——
First Citizen. That
Is the Archbishop.
Second Citizen. Rather say the Pope:
London will be soon his Rome: he walks
As if he trod upon the heads of men:
He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold;—
Beside him moves the Babylonian woman
Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow,
Mitred adulterer! he is joined in sin,
Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge.

33–7 Canst. . . enginery *1870*;
Canst thou not think
Of change in that low scene, in which thou art
Not a spectator but an actor? . . . *1824.*

43–57 Wrap . . . bold as he *1870*; *omitted 1824.*

Third Citizen (*lifting up his eyes*). Good Lord! rain it down upon him! . . .
Amid her ladies walks the papist queen,
As if her nice feet scorned our English earth.
The Canaanitish Jezebel! I would be
A dog if I might tear her with my teeth!
There 's old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke,
Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry,
And others who make base their English breed
By vile participation of their honours
With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates.
When lawyers masque 'tis time for honest men
To strip the vizor from their purposes.
A seasonable time for masquers this!
When Englishmen and Protestants should sit
dust on their dishonoured heads,
To avert the wrath of Him whose scourge is felt
For the great sins which have drawn down from Heaven
and foreign overthrow.
The remnant of the martyred saints in Rochefort
Have been abandoned by their faithless allies
To that idolatrous and adulterous torturer
Lewis of France,—the Palatinate is lost——

Enter LEIGHTON (*who has been branded in the face*) *and* BASTWICK.

Canst thou be—art thou——?
Leighton. I *was* Leighton: what
I *am* thou seest. And yet turn thine eyes,
And with thy memory look on thy friend's mind,
Which is unchanged, and where is written deep
The sentence of my judge.
Third Citizen. Are these the marks with which
Laud thinks to improve the image of his Maker
Stamped on the face of man? Curses upon him,
The impious tyrant!
Second Citizen. It is said besides
That lewd and papist drunkards may profane
The Sabbath with their
And has permitted that most heathenish custom
Of dancing round a pole dressed up with wreaths
On May-day.
A man who thus twice crucifies his God
May well his brother.—In my mind, friend,
The root of all this ill is prelacy.
I would cut up the root.
Third Citizen. And by what means?
Second Citizen. Smiting each Bishop under the fifth rib.
Third Citizen. You seem to know the vulnerable place
Of these same crocodiles.

73 make *1824*; made *1839*. 78–114 A seasonable . . . of the flesh *1870*; *omitted 1824*.

Second Citizen. I learnt it in
Egyptian bondage, sir. Your worm of Nile
Betrays not with its flattering tears like they;
For, when they cannot kill, they whine and weep.
Nor is it half so greedy of men's bodies
As they of soul and all; nor does it wallow
In slime as they in simony and lies
And close lusts of the flesh.
A Marshalsman. Give place, give place!
You torch-bearers, advance to the great gate,
And then attend the Marshal of the Masque
Into the Royal presence.
A Law Student. What thinkest thou
Of this quaint show of ours, my agèd friend?
Even now we see the redness of the torches
Inflame the night to the eastward, and the clarions
[Gasp?] to us on the wind's wave. It comes!
And their sounds, floating hither round the pageant,
Rouse up the astonished air.
First Citizen. I will not think but that our country's wounds
May yet be healed. The king is just and gracious,
Though wicked counsels now pervert his will:
These once cast off—
Second Citizen. As adders cast their skins
And keep their venom, so kings often change;
Councils and counsellors hang on one another,
Hiding the loathsome . . . . . .
Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.
The Youth. Oh, still those dissonant thoughts!—List how the music
Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches
Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided
Like waves before an admiral's prow!
A Marshalsman. Give place
To the Marshal of the Masque!
A Pursuivant. Room for the King!
The Youth. How glorious! See those thronging chariots
Rolling, like painted clouds before the wind,
Behind their solemn steeds: how some are shaped
Like curved sea-shells dyed by the azure depths
Of Indian seas; some like the new-born moon;
And some like cars in which the Romans climbed
(Canopied by Victory's eagle-wings outspread)
The Capitolian—See how gloriously

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108 bondage *cj. Forman*; bondages *1870*. 119–23 Even now . . . air *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 132 how the *1870*; loud *1824*. 136 *A Pursuivant.* Room for the King! *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 138–40 Rolling . . . depths *1870*;

Rolling like painted clouds before the wind:
Some are
Like curvèd shells, dyed by the azure depths *1824*.

The mettled horses in the torchlight stir
Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,
Like shapes of some diviner element
Than English air, and beings nobler than
The envious and admiring multitude.
Second Citizen. Ay, there they are—
Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows,
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless
It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
The tithe that will support them till they crawl
Back to her cold hard bosom. Here is health
Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,
Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,
And England's sin by England's punishment.
And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,
Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
At once the sign and the thing signified—
A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung,
Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins
And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral
Of this presentment, and bring up the rear
Of painted pomp with misery!
The Youth. 'Tis but
The anti-masque, and serves as discords do
In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers
If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw;
Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself
Without the touch of sorrow?
Second Citizen. I and thou——
A Marshalsman. Place, give place!

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in Whitehall. Enter the* KING, QUEEN, LAUD, LORD STRAFFORD, LORD COTTINGTON, *and other Lords*; ARCHY; *also* ST. JOHN, *with some Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.*

King. Thanks, gentlemen. I heartily accept
This token of your service: your gay masque
Was performed gallantly. And it shows well
When subjects twine such flowers of [observance?]
With the sharp thorns that deck the English crown.

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162 her *1870*; its *1824*. 170 jades *1870*; shapes *1824*. 173 presentment *1870*; presentiment *1824*. 179, 180 I . . . place! *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 8-9 And . . . thanks *1870*; *omitted 1824*.

A gentle heart enjoys what it confers,
Even as it suffers that which it inflicts,
Though Justice guides the stroke.
Accept my hearty thanks.
Queen. And gentlemen,
Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant
Rose on me like the figures of past years,
Treading their still path back to infancy,
More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer
The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept
To think I was in Paris, where these shows
Are well devised—such as I was ere yet
My young heart shared a portion of the burthen,
The careful weight, of this great monarchy.
There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure
And that which it regards, no clamour lifts
Its proud interposition.
In Paris ribald censurers dare not move
Their poisonous tongues against these sinless sports;
And *his* smile
Warms those who bask in it, as ours would do
If . . . Take my heart's thanks: add them, gentlemen,
To those good words which, were he King of France,
My royal lord would turn to golden deeds.
St. John. Madam, the love of Englishmen can make
The lightest favour of their lawful king
Outweigh a despot's.—We humbly take our leaves,
Enriched by smiles which France can never buy.
[*Exeunt* St. John *and the Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.*
King. My Lord Archbishop,
Mark you what spirit sits in St. John's eyes?
Methinks it is too saucy for this presence.

Archy. Yes, pray your Grace look: for, like an unsophisticated [eye] sees everything upside down, you who are wise will discern the shadow of an idiot in lawn sleeves and a rochet setting springes to catch woodcocks in haymaking time. Poor Archy, whose owl-eyes are tempered to the error of his age, and because he is a fool, and by special ordinance of God forbidden ever to see himself as he is, sees now in that deep eye a blindfold devil sitting on the ball, and weighing words out between king and subjects. One scale is full of promises, and the other full of protestations: and then another devil creeps behind the first out of the dark windings [of a] pregnant lawyer's brain, and takes the bandage from the other's eyes, and throws a sword into the left-hand scale, for all the world like my Lord Essex's there.

Strafford. A rod in pickle for the Fool's back!

Archy. Ay, and some are now smiling whose tears will make the brine; for the Fool sees——

Strafford. Insolent! You shall have your coat turned and be whipped out of the palace for this.

22-90 In Paris . . . rebuke *1870*; *omitted 1824.*

Archy. When all the fools are whipped, and all the Protestant writers, while the knaves are whipping the fools ever since a thief was set to catch a thief. If all turncoats were whipped out of palaces, poor Archy would be disgraced in good company. Let the knaves whip the fools, and all the fools laugh at it. [Let the] wise and godly slit each other's noses and ears (having no need of any sense of discernment in their craft); and the knaves, to marshal them, join in a procession to Bedlam, to entreat the madmen to omit their sublime Platonic contemplations, and manage the state of England. Let all the honest men who lie [pinched?] up at the prisons or the pillories, in custody of the pursuivants of the High-Commission Court, marshal them.

Enter Secretary LYTTELTON, *with papers.*

King (*looking over the papers*). These stiff Scots
His Grace of Canterbury must take order
To force under the Church's yoke.—You, Wentworth,
Shall be myself in Ireland, and shall add
Your wisdom, gentleness, and energy,
To what in me were wanting.—My Lord Weston,
Look that those merchants draw not without loss
Their bullion from the Tower; and, on the payment
Of shipmoney, take fullest compensation
For violation of our royal forests,
Whose limits, from neglect, have been o'ergrown
With cottages and cornfields. The uttermost
Farthing exact from those who claim exemption
From knighthood: that which once was a reward
Shall thus be made a punishment, that subjects
May know how majesty can wear at will
The rugged mood.—My Lord of Coventry,
Lay my command upon the Courts below
That bail be not accepted for the prisoners
Under the warrant of the Star Chamber.
The people shall not find the stubbornness
Of Parliament a cheap or easy method
Of dealing with their rightful sovereign:
And doubt not this, my Lord of Coventry,
We will find time and place for fit rebuke.—
My Lord of Canterbury.
Archy. The fool is here.
Laud. I crave permission of your Majesty
To order that this insolent fellow be
Chastised: he mocks the sacred character,
Scoffs at the state, and—
King. What, my Archy?
He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears,
Yet with a quaint and graceful licence—Prithee
For this once do not as Prynne would, were he

64 pinched *marked as doubtful by Rossetti, 1870*; *Forman, Dowden*; penned *Woodberry.* 95 state *1870*; stake *1824.*

Primate of England. With your Grace's leave,
He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot
Hung in his gilded prison from the window
Of a queen's bower over the public way,
Blasphemes with a bird's mind:—his words, like arrows
Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,
Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.—
(*To* Archy.) Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence
Ten minutes in the rain; be it your penance
To bring news how the world goes there. [*Exit* Archy.
Poor Archy!
He weaves about himself a world of mirth
Out of the wreck of ours.
Laud. I take with patience, as my Master did,
All scoffs permitted from above.
King. My lord,
Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words
Had wings, but these have talons.
Queen. And the lion
That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord,
I see the new-born courage in your eye
Armed to strike dead the Spirit of the Time,
Which spurs to rage the many-headed beast.
Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve,
And it were better thou hadst still remained
The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs
The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer;
And Opportunity, that empty wolf,
Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions
Even to the disposition of thy purpose,
And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel;
And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak,
Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace,
And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,
As when she keeps the company of rebels,
Who think that she is Fear. This do, lest we
Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle
In a bright dream, and wake as from a dream
Out of our worshipped state.
King. Belovèd friend,
God is my witness that this weight of power,
Which He sets me my earthly task to wield
Under His law, is my delight and pride
Only because thou lovest that and me.
For a king bears the office of a God
To all the under world; and to his God
Alone he must deliver up his trust,

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99 With your Grace's leave *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 106–10 Go . . . ours *spoken by* The Queen, *1824*. 116 your *1824*; thine *1870*. 118 Which . . . beast *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 134-232 Belovèd . . . mutilation *1870*; *omitted 1824*.

Unshorn of its permitted attributes.
[It seems] now as the baser elements
Had mutinied against the golden sun
That kindles them to harmony, and quells
Their self-destroying rapine. The wild million
Strike at the eye that guides them; like as humours
Of the distempered body that conspire
Against the spirit of life throned in the heart,—
And thus become the prey of one another,
And last of death—
  Strafford. That which would be ambition in a subject
Is duty in a sovereign; for on him,
As on a keystone, hangs the arch of life,
Whose safety is its strength. Degree and form,
And all that makes the age of reasoning man
More memorable than a beast's, depend on this—
That Right should fence itself inviolably
With Power; in which respect the state of England
From usurpation by the insolent commons
Cries for reform.
Get treason, and spare treasure. Fee with coin
The loudest murmurers; feed with jealousies
Opposing factions,—be thyself of none;
And borrow gold of many, for those who lend
Will serve thee till thou payest them; and thus
Keep the fierce spirit of the hour at bay,
Till time, and its coming generations
Of nights and days unborn, bring some one chance,

. . . .

Or war or pestilence or Nature's self,—
By some distemperature or terrible sign,
Be as an arbiter betwixt themselves.
                                Nor let your Majesty
Doubt here the peril of the unseen event.
How did your brother Kings, coheritors
In your high interest in the subject earth,
Rise past such troubles to that height of power
Where now they sit, and awfully serene
Smile on the trembling world? Such popular storms
Philip the Second of Spain, this Lewis of France,
And late the German head of many bodies,
And every petty lord of Italy,
Quelled or by arts or arms. Is England poorer
Or feebler? or art thou who wield'st her power
Tamer than they? or shall this island be—
[Girdled] by its inviolable waters—
To the world present and the world to come
Sole pattern of extinguished monarchy?
Not if thou dost as I would have thee do.
  King. Your words shall be my deeds:
You speak the image of my thought. My friend

(If Kings can have a friend, I call thee so),
Beyond the large commission which [belongs]
Under the great seal of the realm, take this:
And, for some obvious reasons, let there be
No seal on it, except my kingly word
And honour as I am a gentleman.
Be—as thou art within my heart and mind—
Another self, here and in Ireland:
Do what thou judgest well, take amplest licence,
And stick not even at questionable means.
Hear me, Wentworth. My word is as a wall
Between thee and this world thine enemy—
That hates thee, for thou lovest me.
Strafford. I own
No friend but thee, no enemies but thine:
Thy lightest thought is my eternal law.
How weak, how short, is life to pay——
King. Peace, peace.
Thou ow'st me nothing yet.
(*To* Laud.) My lord, what say
Those papers?
Laud. Your Majesty has ever interposed,
In lenity towards your native soil,
Between the heavy vengeance of the Church
And Scotland. Mark the consequence of warming
This brood of northern vipers in your bosom.
The rabble, instructed no doubt
By Loudon, Lindsay, Hume, and false Argyll
(For the waves never menace heaven until
Scourged by the wind's invisible tyranny),
Have in the very temple of the Lord
Done outrage to His chosen ministers.
They scorn the liturgy of the Holy Church,
Refuse to obey her canons, and deny
The apostolic power with which the Spirit
Has filled its elect vessels, even from him
Who held the keys with power to loose and bind,
To him who now pleads in this royal presence.—
Let ample powers and new instructions be
Sent to the High Commissioners in Scotland.
To death, imprisonment, and confiscation,
Add torture, add the ruin of the kindred
Of the offender, add the brand of infamy,
Add mutilation: and if this suffice not,
Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst
They may lick up that scum of schismatics.
I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring
What we possess, still prate of Christian peace,
As if those dreadful arbitrating messengers
Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong,

237 arbitrating messengers *1870*; messengers of wrath *1824*.

Should be let loose against the innocent sleep
Of templed cities and the smiling fields,
For some poor argument of policy
Which touches our own profit or our pride
(Where it indeed were Christian charity
To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand):
And, when our great Redeemer, when our God,
When He who gave, accepted, and retained
Himself in propitiation of our sins,
Is scorned in His immediate ministry,
With hazard of the inestimable loss
Of all the truth and discipline which is
Salvation to the extremest generation
Of men innumerable, they talk of peace!
Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now:
For, by that Christ who came to bring a sword,
Not peace, upon the earth, and gave command
To His disciples at the Passover
That each should sell his robe and buy a sword,—
Once strip that minister of naked wrath,
And it shall never sleep in peace again
Till Scotland bend or break.
King. My Lord Archbishop,
Do what thou wilt and what thou canst in this.
Thy earthly even as thy heavenly King
Gives thee large power in his unquiet realm.
But we want money, and my mind misgives me
That for so great an enterprise, as yet,
We are unfurnished.
Strafford. Yet it may not long
Rest on our wills.
Cottington. The expenses
Of gathering shipmoney, and of distraining
For every petty rate (for we encounter
A desperate opposition inch by inch
In every warehouse and on every farm),
Have swallowed up the gross sum of the imposts;
So that, though felt as a most grievous scourge
Upon the land, they stand us in small stead
As touches the receipt.
Strafford. 'Tis a conclusion
Most arithmetical: and thence you infer
Perhaps the assembling of a parliament.
Now, if a man should call his dearest enemies
To sit in licensed judgement on his life,
His Majesty might wisely take that course.

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239 the *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 243, 244 *Parentheses inserted 1870*. 246, 247 When He . . . sins *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 248 ministry *1870*; ministers *1824*. 249–52 With . . . innumerable *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 254–455 For by . . . I'll go in *1870*; *omitted 1824*.

[*Aside to* COTTINGTON.
It is enough to expect from these lean imposts
That they perform the office of a scourge,
Without more profit. (*Aloud.*) Fines and confiscations,
And a forced loan from the refractory city,
Will fill our coffers: and the golden love
Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends
For the worshipped father of our common country,
With contributions from the catholics,
Will make Rebellion pale in our excess.
Be these the expedients until time and wisdom
Shall frame a settled state of government.
Laud. And weak expedients they! Have we not drained
All, till the   which seemed
A mine exhaustless?
Strafford. And the love which *is*,
If loyal hearts could turn their blood to gold.
Laud. Both now grow barren: and I speak it not
As loving parliaments, which, as they have been
In the right hand of bold bad mighty kings
The scourges of the bleeding Church, I hate.
Methinks they scarcely can deserve our fear.
Strafford. Oh! my dear liege, take back the wealth thou gavest:
With that, take all I held, but as in trust
For thee, of mine inheritance: leave me but
This unprovided body for thy service,
And a mind dedicated to no care
Except thy safety:—but assemble not
A parliament. Hundreds will bring, like me,
Their fortunes, as they would their blood, before——
King. No! thou who judgest them art but one. Alas!
We should be too much out of love with Heaven,
Did this vile world show many such as thee,
Thou perfect, just, and honourable man!
Never shall it be said that Charles of England
Stripped those he loved for fear of those he scorns;
Nor will he so much misbecome his throne
As to impoverish those who most adorn
And best defend it. That you urge, dear Strafford,
Inclines me rather——
Queen. To a parliament?
Is this thy firmness? and thou wilt preside
Over a knot of   censurers,
To the unswearing of thy best resolves,
And choose the worst, when the worst comes too soon?
Plight not the worst before the worst must come.
Oh, wilt thou smile whilst our ribald foes,
Dressed in their own usurped authority,
Sharpen their tongues on Henrietta's fame?
It is enough! Thou lovest me no more! [*Weeps.*
King. Oh, Henrietta! [*They talk apart.*

Cottington (*to* LAUD). Money we have none:
And all the expedients of my Lord of Strafford
Will scarcely meet the arrears.
Laud. Without delay
An army must be sent into the north;
Followed by a Commission of the Church,
With amplest power to quench in fire and blood,
And tears and terror, and the pity of hell,
The intenser wrath of Heresy. God will give
Victory; and victory over Scotland give
The lion England tamed into our hands.
That will lend power, and power bring gold.
Cottington. Meanwhile
We must begin first where your Grace leaves off.
Gold must give power, or——
Laud. I am not averse
From the assembling of a parliament.
Strong actions and smooth words might teach them soon
The lesson to obey. And are they not
A bubble fashioned by the monarch's mouth,
The birth of one light breath? If they serve no purpose,
A word dissolves them.
Strafford. The engine of parliaments
Might be deferred until I can bring over
The Irish regiments: they will serve to assure
The issue of the war against the Scots.
And, this game won—which if lost, all is lost—
Gather these chosen leaders of the rebels,
And call them, if you will, a parliament.
King. Oh, be our feet still tardy to shed blood,
Guilty though it may be! I would still spare
The stubborn country of my birth, and ward
From countenances which I loved in youth
The wrathful Church's lacerating hand.
(*To* LAUD.) Have you o'erlooked the other articles?
[*Re-enter* ARCHY.
Laud. Hazlerig, Hampden, Pym, young Harry Vane,
Cromwell, and other rebels of less note,
Intend to sail with the next favouring wind
For the Plantations.
Archy. Where they think to found
A commonwealth like Gonzalo's in the play,
Gynaecocoenic and pantisocratic.
King. What 's that, sirrah?
Archy. New devil's politics.
Hell is the pattern of all commonwealths:
Lucifer was the first republican.
Will you hear Merlin's prophecy, how three [posts?]
'In one brainless skull, when the whitethorn is full,
Shall sail round the world, and come back again:

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363 Gonzalo's *1870*; Gonzaga *Boscombe MS.*

Shall sail round the world in a brainless skull,
And come back again when the moon is at full:'—
When, in spite of the Church,
They will hear homilies of whatever length
Or form they please.

[*Cottington*?] So please your Majesty to sign this order
For their detention.

Archy. If your Majesty were tormented night and day by fever, gout, rheumatism, and stone, and asthma, etc., and you found these diseases had secretly entered into a conspiracy to abandon you, should you think it necessary to lay an embargo on the port by which they meant to dispeople your unquiet kingdom of man?

King. If fear were made for kings, the Fool mocks wisely;
But in this case—— (*writing*). Here, my lord, take the warrant,
And see it duly executed forthwith.—
That imp of malice and mockery shall be punished.

[*Exeunt all but* KING, QUEEN, *and* ARCHY.

Archy. Ay, I am the physician of whom Plato prophesied, who was to be accused by the confectioner before a jury of children, who found him guilty without waiting for the summing-up, and hanged him without benefit of clergy. Thus Baby Charles, and the Twelfth-night Queen of Hearts, and the overgrown schoolboy Cottington, and that little urchin Laud—who would reduce a verdict of 'guilty, death,' by famine, if it were impregnable by composition—all impannelled against poor Archy for presenting them bitter physic the last day of the holidays.

Queen. Is the rain over, sirrah?
King. When it rains
And the sun shines, 'twill rain again to-morrow:
And therefore never smile till you've done crying.

Archy. But 'tis all over now: like the April anger of woman, the gentle sky has wept itself serene.

Queen. What news abroad? how looks the world this morning?

Archy. Gloriously as a grave covered with virgin flowers. There's a rainbow in the sky. Let your Majesty look at it, for

'A rainbow in the morning
Is the shepherd's warning;'

and the flocks of which you are the pastor are scattered among the mountain-tops, where every drop of water is a flake of snow, and the breath of May pierces like a January blast.

King. The sheep have mistaken the wolf for their shepherd, my poor boy; and the shepherd, the wolves for their watchdogs.

Queen. But the rainbow was a good sign, Archy: it says that the waters of the deluge are gone, and can return no more.

Archy. Ay, the salt-water one: but that of tears and blood must yet come down, and that of fire follow, if there be any truth in lies.—The rainbow hung over the city with all its shops, . . . and churches, from north to south, like a bridge of congregated lightning pieced by the masonry of heaven—like a balance in which the angel that distributes the coming hour was weighing that heavy one whose poise is now felt in the lightest hearts, before it bows the proudest heads under the meanest feet.

Queen. Who taught you this trash, sirrah?

Archy. A torn leaf out of an old book trampled in the dirt.—But for the rainbow. It moved as the sun moved, and . . . until the top of the Tower . . . of a cloud through its left-hand tip, and Lambeth Palace look as dark as a rock before the other. Methought I saw a crown figured upon one tip, and a mitre on the other. So, as I had heard treasures were found where the rainbow quenches its points upon the earth, I set off, and at the Tower—— But I shall not tell your Majesty what I found close to the closet-window on which the rainbow had glimmered.

King. Speak: I will make my Fool my conscience.

Archy. Then conscience is a fool.—I saw there a cat caught in a rat-trap. I heard the rats squeak behind the wainscots: it seemed to me that the very mice were consulting on the manner of her death.

Queen. Archy is shrewd and bitter.

Archy. Like the season,
So blow the winds.—But at the other end of the rainbow, where the gray rain was tempered along the grass and leaves by a tender interfusion of violet and gold in the meadows beyond Lambeth, what think you that I found instead of a mitre?

King. Vane's wits perhaps.

Archy. Something as vain. I saw a gross vapour hovering in a stinking ditch over the carcass of a dead ass, some rotten rags, and broken dishes—the wrecks of what once administered to the stuffing-out and the ornament of a worm of worms. His Grace of Canterbury expects to enter the New Jerusalem some Palm Sunday in triumph on the ghost of this ass.

Queen. Enough, enough! Go desire Lady Jane
She place my lute, together with the music
Mari received last week from Italy,
In my boudoir, and—— [*Exit* ARCHY.

King. I'll go in.

Queen. My beloved lord,
Have you not noted that the Fool of late
Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words
Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?
What can it mean? I should be loth to think
Some factious slave had tutored him.

King. Oh, no!
He is but Occasion's pupil. Partly 'tis
That our minds piece the vacant intervals
Of his wild words with their own fashioning,—

460, 461 Oh . . . pupil *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 461 Partly 'tis *1870*; It partly is *1824*.

As in the imagery of summer clouds,
Or coals of the winter fire, idlers find
The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts:
And partly, that the terrors of the time
Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits;
And in the lightest and the least, may best
Be seen the current of the coming wind.
Queen. Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts.
Come, I will sing to you; let us go try
These airs from Italy; and, as we pass
The gallery, we'll decide where that Correggio
Shall hang—the Virgin Mother
With her child, born the King of heaven and earth,
Whose reign is men's salvation. And you shall see
A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,
Stamped on the heart by never-erring love;
Liker than any Vandyke ever made,
A pattern to the unborn age of thee,
Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy
A thousand times, and now should weep for sorrow,
Did I not think that after we were dead
Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that
The cares we waste upon our heavy crown
Would make it light and glorious as a wreath
Of Heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.
King. Dear Henrietta!

SCENE III.—*The Star Chamber.* LAUD, JUXON, STRAFFORD, *and others, as Judges.* PRYNNE *as a Prisoner, and then* BASTWICK.

Laud. Bring forth the prisoner Bastwick: let the clerk
Recite his sentence.
Clerk. 'That he pay five thousand
Pounds to the king, lose both his ears, be branded
With red-hot iron on the cheek and forehead,
And be imprisoned within Lancaster Castle
During the pleasure of the Court.'
Laud. Prisoner,
If you have aught to say wherefore this sentence
Should not be put into effect, now speak.
Juxon. If you have aught to plead in mitigation,
Speak.
Bastwick. Thus, my lords. If, like the prelates, I
Were an invader of the royal power,
A public scorner of the word of God,
Profane, idolatrous, popish, superstitious,
Impious in heart and in tyrannic act,
Void of wit, honesty, and temperance;

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465 of *1870*; in *1824*. 473–7 and, as . . . salvation *1870*; *omitted 1824*. *Scene III.* 1–69 Bring . . . utmost *1870*; *omitted 1824*.

If Satan were my lord, as theirs,—our God
Pattern of all I should avoid to do;
Were I an enemy of my God and King
And of good men, as ye are;—I should merit
Your fearful state and gilt prosperity,
Which, when ye wake from the last sleep, shall turn
To cowls and robes of everlasting fire.
But, as I am, I bid ye grudge me not
The only earthly favour ye can yield,
Or I think worth acceptance at your hands,—
Scorn, mutilation, and imprisonment.
even as my Master did,
Until Heaven's kingdom shall descend on earth,
Or earth be like a shadow in the light
Of Heaven absorbed—some few tumultuous years
Will pass, and leave no wreck of what opposes
His will whose will is power.
Laud. Officer, take the prisoner from the bar,
And be his tongue slit for his insolence.
Bastwick. While this hand holds a pen——
Laud. Be his hands——
Juxon. Stop!
Forbear, my lord! The tongue, which now can speak
No terror, would interpret, being dumb,
Heaven's thunder to our harm; . . .
And hands, which now write only their own shame,
With bleeding stumps might sign our blood away.
Laud. Much more such 'mercy' among men would be,
Did all the ministers of Heaven's revenge
Flinch thus from earthly retribution. I
Could suffer what I would inflict. [*Exit* Bastwick *guarded.*
Bring up
The Lord Bishop of Lincoln.—
(*To* Strafford.) Know you not
That, in distraining for ten thousand pounds
Upon his books and furniture at Lincoln,
Were found these scandalous and seditious letters
Sent from one Osbaldistone, who is fled?
I speak it not as touching this poor person;
But of the office which should make it holy,
Were it as vile as it was ever spotless.
Mark too, my lord, that this expression strikes
His Majesty, if I misinterpret not.

Enter Bishop Williams *guarded.*

Strafford. 'Twere politic and just that Williams taste
The bitter fruit of his connection with
The schismatics. But you, my Lord Archbishop,

27–32 even . . . power *printed as a fragment, Garnett, 1862*; *inserted here conjecturally, Rossetti, 1870.*

Who owed your first promotion to his favour,
Who grew beneath his smile——
Laud. Would therefore beg
The office of his judge from this High Court,—
That it shall seem, even as it is, that I,
In my assumption of this sacred robe,
Have put aside all worldly preference,
All sense of all distinction of all persons,
All thoughts but of the service of the Church.—
Bishop of Lincoln!
Williams. Peace, proud hierarch!
I know my sentence, and I own it just.
Thou wilt repay me less than I deserve,
In stretching to the utmost

. . . .

Scene IV.—Hampden, Pym, Cromwell, *his Daughter, and young* Sir Harry Vane.

Hampden. England, farewell! thou, who hast been my cradle,
Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!
I held what I inherited in thee
As pawn for that inheritance of freedom
Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile:
How can I call thee England, or my country?—
Does the wind hold?
Vane. The vanes sit steady
Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings
Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,
Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air.
Mark too that flock of fleecy-wingèd clouds
Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.
Hampden. Hail, fleet herald
Of tempest! that rude pilot who shall guide
Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,
Beyond the shot of tyranny,
Beyond the webs of that swoln spider . . .
Beyond the curses, calumnies, and [lies?]
Of atheist priests! And thou
Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,
Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm,
Bright as the path to a belovèd home,
Oh, light us to the isles of the evening land!
Like floating Edens cradled in the glimmer
Of sunset, through the distant mist of years
Touched by departing hope, they gleam! lone regions,
Where Power's poor dupes and victims yet have never
Propitiated the savage fear of kings
With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew

11 flock *1824*; fleet *1870*. 13 rude *1870*; wild *1824*. 16–18 Beyond . . . priests *1870*; *omitted 1824*. 25 Touched *1870*; Tinged *1824*.

Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake
To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns;
Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo
Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites
Wrest man's free worship, from the God who loves,
To the poor worm who envies us His love!
Receive, thou young   of Paradise.
These exiles from the old and sinful world!

. . . .

This glorious clime, this firmament, whose lights
Dart mitigated influence through their veil
Of pale blue atmosphere; whose tears keep green
The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth;
This vaporous horizon, whose dim round
Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea,
Repelling invasion from the sacred towers,
Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,
A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall.
The boundless universe
Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul
That owns no master; while the loathliest ward
Of this wide prison, England, is a nest
Of cradling peace built on the mountain tops,—
To which the eagle spirits of the free,
Which range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm
Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,
Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die
And cannot be repelled.
Like eaglets floating in the heaven of time,
They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop
Through palaces and temples thunderproof.

SCENE V

Archy. I'll go live under the ivy that overgrows the terrace, and count the tears shed on its old [roots ?] as the [wind ?] plays the song of

'A widow bird sate mourning
Upon a wintry bough.'

[*Sings*]

Heigho! the lark and the owl!
One flies the morning, and one lulls the night:—
Only the nightingale, poor fond soul,
Sings like the fool through darkness and light.

34 To the poor *1870*; Towards the *1824*. 38 their *1870*; the *1824*. 46 boundless *1870*; mighty *1824*. 48 owns no *1824*; owns a *1870*. ward *1870*; spot *1824*. 50 cradling *1870*; cradled *1824*. 54, 55 Return . . . repelled *1870*;

Return to brood over the [   ] thoughts
That cannot die, and may not be repelled *1824*.

56-8 Like . . . thunderproof *1870*; *omitted 1824*. *Scene V.* 1-9 I'll . . . light *1870*; *omitted 1824*.

'A widow bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

'There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound.'

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

[Composed at Lerici on the Gulf of Spezzia in the spring and early summer of 1822—the poem on which Shelley was engaged at the time of his death. Published by Mrs. Shelley in the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824, pp. 73–95. Several emendations, the result of Dr. Garnett's examination of the Boscombe MS., were given to the world by Miss Mathilde Blind, *Westminster Review*, July, 1870. The poem was, of course, included in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, both edd. See Editor's Notes.]

Swift as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth—
The smokeless altars of the mountain snows
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,
To which the birds tempered their matin lay.
All flowers in field or forest which unclose

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,
Swinging their censers in the element,
With orient incense lit by the new ray

Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent
Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air;
And, in succession due, did continent,

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear
The form and character of mortal mould,
Rise as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil, which he of old
Took as his own, and then imposed on them:
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem
The cone of night, now they were laid asleep
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

10–17 A widow . . . sound *1870*; *omitted here 1824*; *printed as* '*A Song*,' *1824, p. 217.*

Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep
Of a green Apennine: before me fled
The night; behind me rose the day; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head,—
When a strange trance over my fancy grew
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread

Was so transparent, that the scene came through
As clear as when a veil of light is drawn
O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn
Bathe in the same cold dew my brow and hair,
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there
The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air,
And then a vision on my brain was rolled.

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,
This was the tenour of my waking dream:—
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude, and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky
One of the million leaves of summer's bier;
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear,
Some flying from the thing they feared, and some
Seeking the object of another's fear;

And others, as with steps towards the tomb,
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked, and called it death;
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:

But more, with motions which each other crossed,
Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw,
Or birds within the noonday aether lost,

34, 35 dawn Bathe *Mrs. Shelley* (*later edd.*); dawn, Bathed *1824*, *1839*.
63 shunned *Boscombe MS.*; spurned *1824*, *1839*.

Upon that path where flowers never grew,—
And, weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,
Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells forever burst;
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
Of grassy paths and wood-lawns interspersed

With overarching elms and caverns cold,
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they
Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way
The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June
When the south wind shakes the extinguished day,

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,
But icy cold, obscured with blinding light
The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon—

When on the sunlit limits of the night
Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,
And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might—

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear
The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form
Bends in dark aether from her infant's chair,—

So came a chariot on the silent storm
Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape
So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,
Crouching within the shadow of a tomb;
And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint aethereal gloom
Tempering the light. Upon the chariot-beam
A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-wingèd team;
The shapes which drew it in thick lightenings
Were lost:—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.
All the four faces of that Charioteer
Had their eyes banded; little profit brings

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun.—
Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

70 Of . . . interspersed *Boscombe MS.*; Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed *1824*; wood-lawn-interspersed *1839*. 84 form] frown *1824*. 93 light . . . beam] light upon the chariot beam; *1824*. 96 it *omitted* *1824*.

Of all that is, has been or will be done;
So ill was the car guided—but it passed
With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,
Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,
And saw, like clouds upon the thunder-blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance
Raging around—such seemed the jubilee
As when to greet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea
From senate-house, and forum, and theatre,
When   upon the free

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.
Nor wanted here the just similitude
Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude
Was driven;—all those who had grown old in power
Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour
Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow
Till the great winter lay the form and name
Of this green earth with them for ever low;—

All but the sacred few who could not tame
Their spirits to the conquerors—but as soon
As they had touched the world with living flame,

Fled back like eagles to their native noon,
Or those who put aside the diadem
Of earthly thrones or gems . . .

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem,
Were neither mid the mighty captives seen,
Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before fierce and obscene.
The wild dance maddens in the van, and those
Who lead it—fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
To savage music, wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,
Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun
Of that fierce Spirit, whose unholy leisure

109 thunder *Boscombe MS.*; thunders *1824*; thunder's *1839*. 112 greet *Boscombe MS.*; meet *1824*, *1839*. 131-4 *See Editor's Note.*

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,
Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair;
And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air
As their feet twinkle; they recede, and now
Bending within each other's atmosphere,

Kindle invisibly—and as they glow,
Like moths by light attracted and repelled,
Oft to their bright destruction come and go,

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled,
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle
And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps—while the shock still may tingle;
One falls and then another in the path
Senseless—nor is the desolation single,

Yet ere I can say *where*—the chariot hath
Passed over them—nor other trace I find
But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore;—behind,
Old men and women foully disarrayed,
Shake their gray hairs in the insulting wind,

And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed,
Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still
Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will
They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose
Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose
Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,
And past in these performs what   in those.

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
Half to myself I said—'And what is this?
Whose shape is that within the car? And why—'

I would have added—'is all here amiss?—'
But a voice answered—'Life!'—I turned, and knew
(O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
To strange distortion out of the hill side,
Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide
And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,
And that the holes he vainly sought to hide,

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158 while *Boscombe MS.*; *omitted 1824, 1839.* 167 And . . . dance *1839*; To seek, to [ ], to strain *1824.* 168 Seeking *1839*; Limping *1824.*

Were or had been eyes:—'If thou canst, forbear
To join the dance, which I had well forborne!'
Said the grim Feature (of my thought aware).

'I will unfold that which to this deep scorn
Led me and my companions, and relate
The progress of the pageant since the morn;

'If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,
Follow it thou even to the night, but I
Am weary.'—Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily
He paused, and ere he could resume, I cried:
'First, who art thou?'—'Before thy memory,

'I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died,
And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

'Corruption would not now thus much inherit
Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise
Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it;

'If I have been extinguished, yet there rise
A thousand beacons from the spark I bore'—
'And who are those chained to the car?'—'The wise,

'The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore
Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light,
Signs of thought's empire over thought—their lore

'Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

'Caught them ere evening.'—'Who is he with chin
Upon his breast, and hands crossed on his chain?'—
'The child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

'The world, and lost all that it did contain
Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more
Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain

'Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before

'Fallen, as Napoleon fell.'—I felt my cheek
Alter, to see the shadow pass away,
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay;
And much I grieved to think how power and will
In opposition rule our mortal day,

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190 Feature . . . aware) *Rossetti, 1870*; Feature of my thought: 'Aware *1824, 1839*. 202 nutriment *Boscombe MS.*; sentiment *1824, 1839*. 205 Stain] Stained *1824, 1839*.

And why God made irreconcilable
Good and the means of good; and for despair
I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were
And scarce have ceased to be.—'Dost thou behold,'
Said my guide, 'those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire,

'Frederick, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,
And hoary anarchs, demagogues, and sage—
    names which the world thinks always old,

'For in the battle Life and they did wage,
She remained conqueror. I was overcome
By my own heart alone, which neither age,

'Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb
Could temper to its object.'—'Let them pass,'
I cried, 'the world and its mysterious doom

'Is not so much more glorious than it was,
That I desire to worship those who drew
New figures on its false and fragile glass

'As the old faded.'—'Figures ever new
Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;
We have but thrown, as those before us threw,

'Our shadows on it as it passed away.
But mark how chained to the triumphal chair
The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

'All that is mortal of great Plato there
Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not;
The star that ruled his doom was far too fair,

'And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,
Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,
Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.

'And near him walk the   twain,
The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion
Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

'The world was darkened beneath either pinion
Of him whom from the flock of conquerors
Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion;

'The other long outlived both woes and wars,
Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept
The jealous key of Truth's eternal doors,

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235 Said my *1824, 1839*; Said then my *cj. Forman.* 238 names which the *1839*; name the *1824.* 252 how] now *cj. Forman.* 260 him *1839*; *omitted 1824.*

‘If Bacon’s eagle spirit had not lept
Like lightning out of darkness—he compelled
The Proteus shape of Nature, as it slept

‘To wake, and lead him to the caves that held
The treasure of the secrets of its reign.
See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

‘The passions which they sung, as by their strain
May well be known: their living melody
Tempers its own contagion to the vein

Of those who are infected with it—I
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!
And so my words have seeds of misery—

‘Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.’
And then he pointed to a company,

’Midst whom I quickly recognized the heirs
Of Caesar’s crime, from him to Constantine;
The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad:
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God;
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,
Was worshipped by the world o’er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched—‘Their power was given
But to destroy,’ replied the leader:—‘I
Am one of those who have created, even

‘If it be but a world of agony.’—
‘Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou?
How did thy course begin?’ I said, ‘and why?

‘Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought—
Speak!’—‘Whence I am, I partly seem to know,

‘And how and by what paths I have been brought
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;—
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

‘Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;—
But follow thou, and from spectator turn
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

‘And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
From thee. Now listen:—In the April prime,
When all the forest-tips began to burn

280 *See Editor’s Note.* 281, 282 Even . . . then *Boscombe MS.* *omitted 1824, 1839.* 296 camest *Boscombe MS.*; comest *1824, 1839.*

'With kindling green, touched by the azure clime
Of the young season, I was laid asleep
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

'Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;
And from it came a gentle rivulet,
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep

'Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove
With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

'All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,
Which they had known before that hour of rest;
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

'Her only child who died upon the breast
At eventide—a king would mourn no more
The crown of which his brows were dispossessed

'When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor
To gild his rival's new prosperity.
Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

'Ills, which if ills can find no cure from thee,
The thought of which no other sleep will quell,
Nor other music blot from memory,

'So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;
And whether life had been before that sleep
The Heaven which I imagine, or a Hell

'Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,
I know not. I arose, and for a space
The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

'Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common sun
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

'Was filled with magic sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

'And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,
And the sun's image radiantly intense

'Burned on the waters of the well that glowed
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze
With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood

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311 season *Boscombe MS.*; year's dawn *1824, 1839.* 322 the *Boscombe MS.*; her *1824, 1839.*

'Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze
Of his own glory, on the vibrating
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

'A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,
And the invisible rain did ever sing

'A silver music on the mossy lawn;
And still before me on the dusky grass,
Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn:

'In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

'Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender,
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,
Glided along the river, and did bend her

'Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow,
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream
That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

'As one enamoured is upborne in dream
O'er lily-paven lakes, mid silver mist,
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

'Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed
The dancing foam; partly to glide along
The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

'Or the faint morning beams that fell among
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees;
And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song

'Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,
And falling drops, moved in a measure new
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

'Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew;

'And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blot
The thoughts of him who gazed on them; and soon

'All that was, seemed as if it had been not;
And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
Her feet like embers; and she, thought by thought,

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361 Of . . . and *Boscombe MS.*; Out of the deep cavern with *1824*, *1839*. 363 Glided *Boscombe MS.*; She glided *1824*, *1839*. 377 in *Boscombe MS.*; to *1824*.

'Trampled its sparks into the dust of death;
As day upon the threshold of the east
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath

'Of darkness re-illumine even the least
Of heaven's living eyes—like day she came,
Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

'To move, as one between desire and shame
Suspended, I said—If, as it doth seem,
Thou comest from the realm without a name

'Into this valley of perpetual dream,
Show whence I came, and where I am, and why—
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

'Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply.
And as a shut lily stricken by the wand
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

'I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,
And suddenly my brain became as sand

'Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador;
Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

'Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,
Until the second bursts;—so on my sight
Burst a new vision, never seen before,

'And the fair shape waned in the coming light,
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

'Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops;
And as the presence of that fairest planet,
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

'That his day's path may end as he began it,
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,

'Or the soft note in which his dear lament
The Brescian[1] shepherd breathes, or the caress
That turned his weary slumber to content;

'So knew I in that light's severe excess
The presence of that Shape which on the stream
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

'More dimly than a day-appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep;
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

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[1] The favourite song, *Stanco di pascolar le pecorelle*, is a Brescian national air.—[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

'Through the sick day in which we wake to weep
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost;
So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

'Beside my path, as silent as a ghost;
But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,
With solemn speed and stunning music, crossed

'The forest, and as if from some dread war
Triumphantly returning, the loud million
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

'A moving arch of victory, the vermilion
And green and azure plumes of Iris had
Built high over her wind-wingèd pavilion,

'And underneath aethereal glory clad
The wilderness, and far before her flew
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

'Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; the crew
Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance
Within a sunbeam;—some upon the new

'Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance
The grassy vesture of the desert, played,
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance;

'Others stood gazing, till within the shade
Of the great mountain its light left them dim;
Others outspeeded it; and others made

'Circles around it, like the clouds that swim
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air;
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

'The chariot and the captives fettered there:—
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood
Fell into the same track at last, and were

'Borne onward.—I among the multitude
Was swept—me, sweetest flowers delayed not long;
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

'Me, not that falling stream's Lethean song;
Me, not the phantom of that early Form
Which moved upon its motion—but among

'The thickest billows of that living storm
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

'Before the chariot had begun to climb
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell,
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

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464 early] aëry *cj. Forman.*

'Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,
Through every paradise and through all glory,
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

'The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story
How all things are transfigured except Love;
For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

'The world can hear not the sweet notes that move
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers—
A wonder worthy of his rhyme.—The grove

'Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,
The earth was gray with phantoms, and the air
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

'A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,
Strange night upon some Indian isle;—thus were

'Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

'Were lost in the white day; others like elves
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

'And others sate chattering like restless apes
On vulgar hands, . . .
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes

'Of kingly mantles; some across the tiar
Of pontiffs sate like vultures; others played
Under the crown which girt with empire

'A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made
Their nests in it. The old anatomies
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

'Of daemon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes
To reassume the delegated power,
Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize,

'Who made this earth their charnel. Others more
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist
Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

'Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist;—

475 awe *Boscombe MS.*; care *1824.* 486 isle *Boscombe MS.*; vale *1824.*
497 sate like vultures *Boscombe MS.*; rode like demons *1824.*

'And others, like discoloured flakes of snow
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair.
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

'Which they extinguished; and, like tears, they were
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

'Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained
The track in which we moved. After brief space,
From every form the beauty slowly waned;

'From every firmest limb and fairest face
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
The action and the shape without the grace

'Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft
With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,
Desire, like a lioness bereft

'Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

'In autumn evening from a poplar tree.
Each like himself and like each other were
At first; but some distorted seemed to be

'Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;
And of this stuff the car's creative ray
Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

'As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way
Mask after mask fell from the countenance
And form of all; and long before the day

'Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

'And fell, as I have fallen, by the wayside;—
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows passed,
And least of strength and beauty did abide.

'Then, what is life? I cried.'—

CANCELLED OPENING OF 'THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE'

[Published by Miss M. Blind, *Westminster Review*, July, 1870.]

Out of the eastern shadow of the Earth,
  Amid the clouds upon its margin gray
Scattered by Night to swathe in its bright birth

  In gold and fleecy snow the infant Day,
The glorious Sun arose: beneath his light,
  The earth and all . . . .

515 those] eyes *cj. Rossetti.* 534 Wrought *Boscombe MS.*; Wrapt *1824.*

EARLY POEMS [1814, 1815]

[The poems which follow appeared, with a few exceptions, either in the volumes published from time to time by Shelley himself, or in the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824, or in the *Poetical Works* of 1839, of which a second and enlarged edition was published by Mrs. Shelley in the same year. A few made their first appearance in some fugitive publication—such as Leigh Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*—and were subsequently incorporated in the collective editions. In every case the *editio princeps* and (where this is possible) the exact date of composition are indicated below the title.]

STANZA, WRITTEN AT BRACKNELL

[Composed March, 1814. Published in Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, 1858.]

Thy dewy looks sink in my breast;
Thy gentle words stir poison there;
Thou hast disturbed the only rest
That was the portion of despair!
Subdued to Duty's hard control,
I could have borne my wayward lot:
The chains that bind this ruined soul
Had cankered then—but crushed it not.

STANZAS.—April, 1814

[Composed at Bracknell, April, 1814. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drank the last pale beam of even:
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.

Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away!
Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungentle mood:
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay:
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth;
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.

The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head:
The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet:
But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead,
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep:
Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows;
Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep.

Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are not free
From the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile.

Stanzas.—6 tear *1816*; glance *1839*.

TO HARRIET

[Composed May, 1814. Published (from the Esdaile MSS.) by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887.]

Thy look of love has power to calm
The stormiest passion of my soul;
Thy gentle words are drops of balm
In life's too bitter bowl;
No grief is mine, but that alone
These choicest blessings I have known.

Harriet! if all who long to live
In the warm sunshine of thine eye,
That price beyond all pain must give,—
Beneath thy scorn to die;
Then hear thy chosen own too late
His heart most worthy of thy hate.

Be thou, then, one among mankind
Whose heart is harder not for state,
Thou only virtuous, gentle, kind,
Amid a world of hate;
And by a slight endurance seal
A fellow-being's lasting weal.

For pale with anguish is his cheek,
His breath comes fast, his eyes are dim,
Thy name is struggling ere he speak,
Weak is each trembling limb;
In mercy let him not endure
The misery of a fatal cure.

Oh, trust for once no erring guide!
Bid the remorseless feeling flee;
'Tis malice, 'tis revenge, 'tis pride,
'Tis anything but thee;
Oh, deign a nobler pride to prove,
And pity if thou canst not love.

TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN

[Composed June, 1814. Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed;
Yes, I was firm—thus wert not thou;—
My baffled looks did fear yet dread
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

II

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scornèd load of agony.

III

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
The   thou alone should be,
To spend years thus, and be rewarded,
As thou, sweet love, requited me
When none were near—Oh! I did wake
From torture for that moment's sake.

IV

Upon my heart thy accents sweet
Of peace and pity fell like dew
On flowers half dead;—thy lips did meet
Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes threw
Their soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

To Mary.—2 wert *1839*; did *1824*. 3 fear *1824*, *1839*; yearn *cj. Rossetti*. 23 Their *1839*; thy *1824*.

V

We are not happy, sweet! our state
Is strange and full of doubt and fear;
More need of words that ills abate;—
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thee and me.

VI

Gentle and good and mild thou art,
Nor can I live if thou appear
Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart
Away from me, or stoop to wear
The mask of scorn, although it be
To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

TO ——

[Published in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 2nd ed. See Editor's Note.]

Yet look on me—take not thine eyes away,
Which feed upon the love within mine own,
Which is indeed but the reflected ray
Of thine own beauty from my spirit thrown.
Yet speak to me—thy voice is as the tone
Of my heart's echo, and I think I hear
That thou yet lovest me; yet thou alone
Like one before a mirror, without care
Of aught but thine own features, imaged there;
And yet I wear out life in watching thee;
A toil so sweet at times, and thou indeed
Art kind when I am sick, and pity me.

MUTABILITY

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings
One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep;
We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day;
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.

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30 thee] thou *1824, 1839.* 32 can I *1839*; I can *1824.* 36 feel'st *1839*; feel *1824.*
Mutability.—15 may *1816*; can *Lodore, chap. xlix, 1835* (Mrs. Shelley). 16 Nought may endure but *1816*; Nor aught endure save *Lodore, chap. xlix, 1835* (Mrs. Shelley).

ON DEATH

[For the date of composition see Editor's Note. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.—*Ecclesiastes.*

The pale, the cold, and the moony smile
Which the meteor beam of a starless night
Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,
Is the flame of life so fickle and wan
That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,
Where Hell and Heaven shall leave thee free
To the universe of destiny.

[This world is the nurse of all we know,
This world is the mother of all we feel,
And the coming of death is a fearful blow
To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel;
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.]

The secret things of the grave are there,
Where all but this frame must surely be,
Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear
No longer will live to hear or to see
All that is great and all that is strange
In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?
Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?
Who painteth the shadows that are beneath
The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?
Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be
With the fears and the love for that which we see?

A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD

Lechlade, Gloucestershire

[Composed September, 1815. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray;
And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day:
Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aëreal Pile! whose pinnacles
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres:
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
And mingling with the still night and mute sky
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild
And terrorless as this serenest night:
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

TO ——

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816. See Editor's Note.]

ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ 'ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ.

Oh! there are spirits of the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees:—
Such lovely ministers to meet
Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
And moonlight seas, that are the voice
Of these inexplicable things,
Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice
When they did answer thee; but they
Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
Beams that were never meant for thine,
Another's wealth:—tame sacrifice
To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?
Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

To —— 1 of *1816*; in *1839*.   8 moonlight *1816*; mountain *1839*.

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
  On the false earth's inconstancy?
Did thine own mind afford no scope
  Of love, or moving thoughts to thee?
That natural scenes or human smiles
Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles?

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
  Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted;
The glory of the moon is dead;
  Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed;
Thine own soul still is true to thee,
But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
  Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
Dream not to chase;—the mad endeavour
  Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

TO WORDSWORTH

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may return:
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
Above the blind and battling multitude:
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan
To think that a most unambitious slave,
Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne
Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer
A frail and bloody pomp which Time has swept
In fragments towards Oblivion. Massacre,

For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept,
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,
And stifled thee, their minister. I know
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time.

LINES

[Published in Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823, where it is headed *November, 1815*. Reprinted in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. See Editor's Note.]

I

The cold earth slept below,
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around, with a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

II

The wintry hedge was black,
The green grass was not seen,
The birds did rest on the bare thorn's breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack
Which the frost had made between.

III

Thine eyes glowed in the glare
Of the moon's dying light;
As a fen-fire's beam on a sluggish stream
Gleams dimly, so the moon shone there,
And it yellowed the strings of thy raven hair,
That shook in the wind of night.

IV

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved—
The wind made thy bosom chill—
The night did shed on thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.

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17 raven *1823*; tangled *1824*.

NOTE ON THE EARLY POEMS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

The remainder of Shelley's Poems will be arranged in the order in which they were written. Of course, mistakes will occur in placing some of the shorter ones; for, as I have said, many of these were thrown aside, and I never saw them till I had the misery of looking over his writings after the hand that traced them was dust; and some were in the hands of others, and I never saw them till now. The subjects of the poems are often to me an unerring guide; but on other occasions I can only guess, by finding them in the pages of the same manuscript book that contains poems with the date of whose composition I am fully conversant. In the present arrangement all his poetical translations will be placed together at the end.

The loss of his early papers prevents my being able to give any of the poetry of his boyhood. Of the few I give as *Early Poems*, the greater part were published with *Alastor*; some of them were written previously, some at the same period. The poem beginning 'Oh, there are spirits in the air' was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth. The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade occurred during his voyage up the Thames in 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly than the summer of 1815. He had just recovered from a severe pulmonary attack; the weather was warm and pleasant. He lived near Windsor Forest; and his life was spent under its shades or on the water, meditating subjects for verse. Hitherto, he had chiefly aimed at extending his political doctrines, and attempted so to do by appeals in prose essays to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things.

In the scanty journals kept during those years I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815 the list is extensive. It includes, in Greek, Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Laertius. In Latin, Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy. In English, Milton's poems, Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Southey's *Madoc* and *Thalaba*, Locke *On the Human Understanding*, Bacon's *Novum Organum*. In Italian, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the *Rêveries d'un Solitaire* of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travels. He read few novels.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1816

THE SUNSET

[Written at Bishopsgate, 1816 (spring). Published in full in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Lines 9–20, and 28–42, appeared in Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823, under the titles, respectively, of *Sunset. From an Unpublished Poem*, and *Grief. A Fragment.*]

There late was One within whose subtle being,
As light and wind within some delicate cloud
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
Genius and death contended. None may know
The sweetness of the joy which made his breath
Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
When, with the Lady of his love, who then
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
He walked along the pathway of a field
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,
But to the west was open to the sky.
There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods—and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.—
'Is it not strange, Isabel,' said the youth,
'I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.'

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep—but when the morning came
The lady found her lover dead and cold.
Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on—in truth I think
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles,
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her agèd father, were a kind of madness,
If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.
For but to see her were to read the tale
Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief;—
Her eyes were black and lustreless and wan:
Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,
Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale;

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4 death *1839*; youth *1824*. 22 sun? We will walk *1824*; sunrise? We will wake *cj. Forman*. 37 Her eyes . . . wan *Hunt, 1823*; *omitted 1824, 1839*. 38 worn *1824*; torn *1839*.

Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins
And weak articulations might be seen
Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day,
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

'Inheritor of more than earth can give,
Passionless calm and silence unreproved,
Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest,
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;
Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace!'
This was the only moan she ever made.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

[Composed, probably, in Switzerland, in the summer of 1816. Published in Hunt's *Examiner*, January 19, 1817, and with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819.]

I

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen among us,—visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
Like memory of music fled,—
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

II

Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

III

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given—
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,

---

2 among *1819*; amongst *1817*. 14 dost *1819*; doth *1817*. 21 fear and dream *1819*; care and pain *Boscombe MS.*

Remain the records of their vain endeavour,
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
I was not heard—I saw them not—
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious night—
They know that never joy illumed my brow
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou—O awful Loveliness,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

37–48 *omitted Boscombe MS.* 44 art *1817*; are *1819*.

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past—there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm—to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

[Composed in Switzerland, July, 1816 (see date below). Printed at the end of the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* published by Shelley in 1817, and reprinted with *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Amongst the Boscombe MSS. is a draft of this Ode, mainly in pencil, which has been collated by Dr. Garnett.]

I

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-coloured, many-voicèd vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony;
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the aethereal waterfall, whose veil

76 or *1819*; nor *1839*. 15 cloud-shadows] cloud shadows *1817*; cloud, shadows *1824*; clouds, shadows *1839*. 20 Thy *1824*; The *1839*.

Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
Which when the voices of the desert fail
Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
Of fire envelop once this silent snow?

53 unfurled] upfurled *cj. James Thomson* (*'B.V.'*). 56 Spread *1824*; Speed *1839*.
69 tracks her there *1824*; watches her *Boscombe MS.*

None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild
So solemn, so serene, that man may be,
But for such faith, with nature reconciled;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling

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79 But for such *1824*; In such a *Boscombe MS.* 108 boundaries of the sky] boundary of the skies *cj. Rossetti* (*cf. ll.* 102, 106). 121 torrents'] torrent's *1817, 1824, 1839*.

Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean-waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

July 23, 1816.

CANCELLED PASSAGE OF MONT BLANC

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

There is a voice, not understood by all,
Sent from these desert-caves. It is the roar
Of the rent ice-cliff which the sunbeams call,
Plunging into the vale—it is the blast
Descending on the pines—the torrents pour. . . .

FRAGMENT: HOME

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Dear home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys,
The least of which wronged Memory ever makes
Bitterer than all thine unremembered tears.

FRAGMENT OF A GHOST STORY

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

A shovel of his ashes took
From the hearth's obscurest nook,
Muttering mysteries as she went.
Helen and Henry knew that Granny
Was as much afraid of Ghosts as any,
  And so they followed hard—
But Helen clung to her brother's arm,
And her own spasm made her shake.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1816, BY MRS. SHELLEY

Shelley wrote little during this year. The poem entitled *The Sunset* was written in the spring of the year, while still residing at Bishopsgate. He spent the summer on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. The *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron. He occupied himself during this voyage by reading the *Nouvelle Héloïse* for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest enthralling interest that pervade this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to Love, that coincided with Shelley's own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful.

Mont Blanc was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour, and Letters from Switzerland*: 'The poem entitled *Mont Blanc* is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and, as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.'

This was an eventful year, and less time was given to study than usual. In the list of his reading I find, in Greek, Theocritus, the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, several of Plutarch's *Lives*, and the works of Lucian. In Latin, Lucretius, Pliny's *Letters*, the *Annals* and *Germany* of Tacitus. In French, the *History of the French Revolution* by Lacretelle. He read for the first time, this year, Montaigne's *Essays*, and regarded them ever after as one of the most delightful and instructive books in the world. The list is scanty in English works: Locke's *Essay*, *Political Justice*, and Coleridge's *Lay Sermon*, form nearly the whole. It was his frequent habit to read aloud to me in the evening; in this way we read, this year, the New Testament, *Paradise Lost*, Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and *Don Quixote*.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817

MARIANNE'S DREAM

[Composed at Marlow, 1817. Published in Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1819, and reprinted in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

A pale Dream came to a Lady fair,
And said, A boon, a boon, I pray!
I know the secrets of the air,
And things are lost in the glare of day,
Which I can make the sleeping see,
If they will put their trust in me.

II

And thou shalt know of things unknown,
If thou wilt let me rest between
The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen:
And half in hope, and half in fright,
The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

III

At first all deadly shapes were driven
Tumultuously across her sleep,
And o'er the vast cope of bending heaven
All ghastly-visaged clouds did sweep;
And the Lady ever looked to spy
If the golden sun shone forth on high.

IV

And as towards the east she turned,
She saw aloft in the morning air,
Which now with hues of sunrise burned,
A great black Anchor rising there;
And wherever the Lady turned her eyes,
It hung before her in the skies.

V

The sky was blue as the summer sea,
The depths were cloudless overhead,
The air was calm as it could be,
There was no sight or sound of dread,
But that black Anchor floating still
Over the piny eastern hill.

VI

The Lady grew sick with a weight of fear
To see that Anchor ever hanging,
And veiled her eyes; she then did hear
The sound as of a dim low clanging,
And looked abroad if she might know
Was it aught else, or but the flow
Of the blood in her own veins, to and fro.

VII

There was a mist in the sunless air,
Which shook as it were with an earthquake's shock,
But the very weeds that blossomed there
Were moveless, and each mighty rock
Stood on its basis steadfastly;
The Anchor was seen no more on high.

VIII

But piled around, with summits hid
In lines of cloud at intervals,
Stood many a mountain pyramid
Among whose everlasting walls
Two mighty cities shone, and ever
Through the red mist their domes did quiver.

IX

On two dread mountains, from whose crest,
Might seem, the eagle, for her brood,
Would ne'er have hung her dizzy nest,
Those tower-encircled cities stood.
A vision strange such towers to see,
Sculptured and wrought so gorgeously,
Where human art could never be.

X

And columns framed of marble white,
And giant fanes, dome over dome
Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright
With workmanship, which could not come
From touch of mortal instrument,
Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent
From its own shapes magnificent.

XI

But still the Lady heard that clang
Filling the wide air far away;
And still the mist whose light did hang
Among the mountains shook alway,
So that the Lady's heart beat fast,
As half in joy, and half aghast,
On those high domes her look she cast.

---

18 golden *1819*; gold *1824, 1839*. 28 or *1824*; nor *1839*. 62 or] a *cj. Rossetti*. 63 its] their *cj. Rossetti*.

XII

Sudden, from out that city sprung
A light that made the earth grow red;
Two flames that each with quivering tongue
Licked its high domes, and over-head
Among those mighty towers and fanes
Dropped fire, as a volcano rains
Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

XIII

And hark! a rush as if the deep
Had burst its bonds; she looked behind
And saw over the western steep
A raging flood descend, and wind
Through that wide vale; she felt no fear,
But said within herself, 'Tis clear
These towers are Nature's own, and she
To save them has sent forth the sea.

XIV

And now those raging billows came
Where that fair Lady sate, and she
Was borne towards the showering flame
By the wild waves heaped tumultuously,
And, on a little plank, the flow
Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

XV

The flames were fiercely vomited
From every tower and every dome,
And dreary light did widely shed
O'er that vast flood's suspended foam,
Beneath the smoke which hung its night
On the stained cope of heaven's light.

XVI

The plank whereon that Lady sate
Was driven through the chasms, about and about,
Between the peaks so desolate
Of the drowning mountains, in and out,
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails—
While the flood was filling those hollow vales.

XVII

At last her plank an eddy crossed,
And bore her to the city's wall,
Which now the flood had reached almost;
It might the stoutest heart appal
To hear the fire roar and hiss
Through the domes of those mighty palaces.

XVIII

The eddy whirled her round and round
Before a gorgeous gate, which stood
Piercing the clouds of smoke which bound
Its aëry arch with light like blood;
She looked on that gate of marble clear,
With wonder that extinguished fear.

XIX

For it was filled with sculptures rarest,
Of forms most beautiful and strange,
Like nothing human, but the fairest
Of wingèd shapes, whose legions range
Throughout the sleep of those that are,
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

XX

And as she looked, still lovelier grew
Those marble forms;—the sculptor sure
Was a strong spirit, and the hue
Of his own mind did there endure

---

92 flames *cj. Rossetti*; waves *1819, 1824, 1839*. 101 mountains *1819*; mountain *1824, 1839*. 106 flood] flames *cj. James Thomson* ('*B.V.*'). 120 that *1819, 1824*; who *1839*.

After the touch, whose power had braided
Such grace, was in some sad change faded.

XXI

She looked, the flames were dim, the flood
  Grew tranquil as a woodland river
Winding through hills in solitude;
  Those marble shapes then seemed to quiver,
And their fair limbs to float in motion,
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

XXII

And their lips moved; one seemed to speak,
  When suddenly the mountains cracked,
And through the chasm the flood did break
  With an earth-uplifting cataract:
The statues gave a joyous scream,
And on its wings the pale thin Dream
Lifted the Lady from the stream.

XXIII

The dizzy flight of that phantom pale
  Waked the fair Lady from her sleep,
And she arose, while from the veil
  Of her dark eyes the Dream did creep,
And she walked about as one who knew
That sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eyes can view.

TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian is a chaotic first draft, from which Mr. Locock [*Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 60–62] has, with patient ingenuity, disengaged a first and a second stanza consistent with the metrical scheme of stanzas iii and iv. The two stanzas thus recovered are printed here immediately below the poem as edited by Mrs. Shelley. It need hardly be added that Mr. Locock's restored version cannot, any more than Mrs. Shelley's obviously imperfect one, be regarded in the light of a final recension.]

I

Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die,
  Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia, turn!
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,
  Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep;
  Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odour, it is yet,
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.
  Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet.
  Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

He cannot make
reader feel all
that he felt.

II

A breathless awe, like the swift change
  Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers,
Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,
  Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.
The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven
  By the enchantment of thy strain,
And on my shoulders wings are woven,

---

135 mountains *1819*; mountain *1824*, *1839*.

To follow its sublime career
Beyond the mighty moons that wane
Upon the verge of Nature's utmost sphere,
Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear.

III

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers
O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,
The blood and life within those snowy fingers
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
My brain is wild, my breath comes quick—
The blood is listening in my frame,
And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
Fall on my overflowing eyes;
My heart is quivering like a flame;
As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,
I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

IV

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
Flows on, and fills all things with melody.—
Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,
On which, like one in trance upborne,
Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.
Now 'tis the breath of summer night,
Which when the starry waters sleep,
Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,
Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

[illegible] which
the world [illegible]
to describe
[illegible]
friendships [illegible]
[illegible]

STANZAS I AND II

As restored by Mr. C. D. Locock

I

Cease, cease—for such wild lessons madmen learn
Thus to be lost, and thus to sink and die
Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia turn
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie
Even though the sounds its voice that were
Between [thy] lips are laid to sleep:
Within thy breath, and on thy hair
Like odour, it is [lingering] yet
And from thy touch like fire doth leap—
Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet—
Alas, that the torn heart can bleed but not forget.

II

[A deep and] breathless awe like the swift change
Of dreams unseen but felt in youthful slumbers
Wild sweet yet incommunicably strange
Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers . . . .

TO CONSTANTIA

[Dated 1817 by Mrs. Shelley, and printed by her in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st edition. A copy exists amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 46.]

I

The rose that drinks the fountain dew
  In the pleasant air of noon,
Grows pale and blue with altered hue—
  In the gaze of the nightly moon;
For the planet of frost, so cold and bright,
Makes it wan with her borrowed light.

II

Such is my heart—roses are fair,
  And that at best a withered blossom;
But thy false care did idly wear
  Its withered leaves in a faithless bosom:
And fed with love, like air and dew,
Its growth——

FRAGMENT: TO ONE SINGING

[Dated 1817 by Mrs. Shelley, and published in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st edition. The MS. original, by which Mr. Locock has revised and (by one line) enlarged the text, is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. The metre, as Mr. Locock (*Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 63) points out, is *terza rima*.]

My spirit like a charmèd bark doth swim
  Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,
Far far away into the regions dim

  Of rapture—as a boat, with swift sails winging
Its way adown some many-winding river,
Speeds through dark forests o'er the waters swinging . . .

A FRAGMENT: TO MUSIC

[Published in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Dated 1817 (Mrs. Shelley).]

Silver key of the fountain of tears,
  Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild;
Softest grave of a thousand fears,
  Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child,
    Is laid asleep in flowers.

ANOTHER FRAGMENT TO MUSIC

[Published in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Dated 1817 (Mrs. Shelley).]

No, Music, thou art not the 'food of Love.'
Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self,
Till it becomes all Music murmurs of.

To Constantia—1 The rose] The red Rose *B.* 2 pleasant] fragrant *B.* 6 her *omitted B.* *To One Singing*—3 Far far away *B.*; Far away *1839.* 6 Speeds . . . swinging *B.*; *omitted 1839.*

'MIGHTY EAGLE'

SUPPOSED TO BE ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[Published in 1882 (*P. W. of B. P. S.*) by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whom it is dated 1817.]

Mighty eagle! thou that soarest
O'er the misty mountain forest,
And amid the light of morning
Like a cloud of glory hiest,
And when night descends defiest
The embattled tempests' warning!

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

[Published in part (v–ix, xiv) by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. (without title); in full 2nd ed. (with title). Four transcripts in Mrs. Shelley's hand are extant: two—Leigh Hunt's and Ch. Cowden Clarke's—described by Forman, and two belonging to Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn, described by Woodberry [*P. W.*, *Centenary Edition*, iii. 193–6]. One of the latter (here referred to as *Fa*) is corrected in Shelley's autograph. A much-corrected draft in Shelley's hand is in the Harvard MS. book.]

I

Thy country's curse is on thee, darkest crest
Of that foul, knotted, many-headed worm
Which rends our Mother's bosom—Priestly Pest!
Masked Resurrection of a buried Form!

II

Thy country's curse is on thee! Justice sold,
Truth trampled, Nature's landmarks overthrown,
And heaps of fraud-accumulated gold,
Plead, loud as thunder, at Destruction's throne.

III

And, whilst that sure slow Angel which aye stands
Watching the beck of Mutability
Delays to execute her high commands,
And, though a nation weeps, spares thine and thee,

IV

Oh, let a father's curse be on thy soul,
And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb;
Be both, on thy gray head, a leaden cowl
To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom!

V

I curse thee by a parent's outraged love,
By hopes long cherished and too lately lost,
By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove,
By griefs which thy stern nature never crossed;

---

9 Angel which aye *cancelled by Shelley for* Fate which ever *Fa*.

VI

By those infantine smiles of happy light,
Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth,
Quenched even when kindled, in untimely night
Hiding the promise of a lovely birth:

VII

By those unpractised accents of young speech,
Which he who is a father thought to frame
To gentlest lore, such as the wisest teach—
Thou strike the lyre of mind!—oh, grief and shame.

VIII

By all the happy see in children's growth—
That undeveloped flower of budding years—
Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,
Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears—

IX

By all the days, under an hireling's care,
Of dull constraint and bitter heaviness,—
O wretched ye if ever any were,—
Sadder than orphans, yet not fatherless!

X

By the false cant which on their innocent lips
Must hang like poison on an opening bloom,
By the dark creeds which cover with eclipse
Their pathway from the cradle to the tomb—

XI

By thy most impious Hell, and all its terror;
By all the grief, the madness, and the guilt
Of thine impostures, which must be their error—
That sand on which thy crumbling power is built—

XII

By thy complicity with lust and hate—
Thy thirst for tears—thy hunger after gold—
The ready frauds which ever on thee wait—
The servile arts in which thou hast grown old—

XIII

By thy most killing sneer, and by thy smile—
By all the arts and snares of thy black den,
And—for thou canst outweep the crocodile—
By thy false tears—those millstones braining men—

---

24 promise of a *1839, 2nd ed.*; promises of *1839, 1st ed.* 27 lore] love *Fa.* 32 and saddest] the saddest *Fa.* 36 yet not fatherless! *cancelled by Shelley for* why not fatherless? *Fa.* 41–4 By . . . built '*crossed by Shelley and marked* dele *by Mrs. Shelley*' (Woodberry) *Fa.* 50 arts and snares *1839, 1st ed.*; snares and arts *Harvard Coll. MS.*; snares and nets *Fa.*; acts and snares *1839, 2nd ed.*

XIV

By all the hate which checks a father's love—
By all the scorn which kills a father's care—
By those most impious hands which dared remove
Nature's high bounds—by thee—and by despair—

XV

Yes, the despair which bids a father groan,
And cry, 'My children are no longer mine—
The blood within those veins may be mine own,
But—Tyrant—their polluted souls are thine;—'

XVI

I curse thee—though I hate thee not.—O slave!
If thou couldst quench the earth-consuming Hell
Of which thou art a daemon, on thy grave
This curse should be a blessing. Fare thee well!

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley (i, v, vi), *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.; in full, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. A transcript is extant in Mrs. Shelley's hand.]

I

The billows on the beach are leaping around it,
The bark is weak and frail,
The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it
Darkly strew the gale.
Come with me, thou delightful child,
Come with me, though the wave is wild,
And the winds are loose, we must not stay,
Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

II

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
They have made them unfit for thee;
They have withered the smile and dried the tear
Which should have been sacred to me.
To a blighting faith and a cause of crime
They have bound them slaves in youthly prime,
And they will curse my name and thee
Because we fearless are and free.

III

Come thou, belovèd as thou art;
Another sleepeth still
Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,
Which thou with joy shalt fill,

59 those] their *Fa.*

1 on the beach *omitted 1839, 1st ed.* 8 of the law *1839, 1st ed.*; of law *1839, 2nd ed.* 14 prime *transcript*; time *edd. 1839.* 16 fearless are *edd. 1839*; are fearless *transcript.* 20 shalt *transcript*; wilt *edd. 1839.*

With fairest smiles of wonder thrown
On that which is indeed our own,
And which in distant lands will be
The dearest playmate unto thee.

IV

Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever,
  Or the priests of the evil faith;
They stand on the brink of that raging river,
  Whose waves they have tainted with death.
It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams and rages and swells;
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

V

Rest, rest, and shriek not, thou gentle child!
  The rocking of the boat thou fearest,
And the cold spray and the clamour wild?—
  There, sit between us two, thou dearest—
Me and thy mother—well we know
The storm at which thou tremblest so,
With all its dark and hungry graves,
Less cruel than the savage slaves
Who hunt us o'er these sheltering waves.

VI

This hour will in thy memory
  Be a dream of days forgotten long.
We soon shall dwell by the azure sea
Of serene and golden Italy,
Or Greece, the Mother of the free;
  And I will teach thine infant tongue
To call upon those heroes old
In their own language, and will mould
Thy growing spirit in the flame
Of Grecian lore, that by such name
A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim!

FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE POEM TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published in Dr. Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I

The world is now our dwelling-place;
Where'er the earth one fading trace
  Of what was great and free does keep,

25–32 Fear . . . eternity *omitted, transcript.* *See* Rosalind and Helen, ll. 894–901. 33 and *transcript*; omitted *edd. 1839.* 41 us *transcript, 1839, 1st ed.*; thee *1839, 2nd ed.* 42 will in *transcript, 1839, 2nd ed.*; will sometime in *1839, 1st ed.* 43 long *transcript*; *omitted edd. 1839.* 48 those *transcript, 1839, 1st ed.*; their *1839, 2nd ed.*

That is our home! . . .
Mild thoughts of man's ungentle race
Shall our contented exile reap;
For who that in some happy place
His own free thoughts can freely chase
By woods and waves can clothe his face
In cynic smiles? Child! we shall weep.

II

This lament,
The memory of thy grievous wrong
Will fade . . .
But genius is omnipotent
To hallow . . .

ON FANNY GODWIN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, among the poems of 1817, in *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

Her voice did quiver as we parted,
Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came, and I departed
Heeding not the words then spoken.
Misery—O Misery,
This world is all too wide for thee.

LINES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley with the date 'November 5th, 1817,' in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

That time is dead for ever, child!
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever!
We look on the past
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

II

The stream we gazed on then rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

DEATH

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

They die—the dead return not—Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye—
They are the names of kindred, friend and lover,
Which he so feebly calls—they all are gone—
Fond wretch, all dead! those vacant names alone,

Death.—5 calls *edd. 1839*; called *1824*.

This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs—alone remain.

II

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh, weep no more!
Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder not!
For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door
Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot
Was even as bright and calm, but transitory,
And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary;
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs—alone remain.

OTHO

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I

Thou wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be,
Last of the Romans, though thy memory claim
From Brutus his own glory—and on thee
Rests the full splendour of his sacred fame:
Nor he who dared make the foul tyrant quail
Amid his cowering senate with thy name,
Though thou and he were great—it will avail
To thine own fame that Otho's should not fail.

II

'Twill wrong thee not—thou wouldst, if thou couldst feel,
Abjure such envious fame—great Otho died
Like thee—he sanctified his country's steel,
At once the tyrant and tyrannicide,
In his own blood—a deed it was to bring
Tears from all men—though full of gentle pride,
Such pride as from impetuous love may spring,
That will not be refused its offering.

FRAGMENTS SUPPOSED TO BE PARTS OF OTHO

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862,—where, however, only the fragment numbered ii. is assigned to *Otho*. Forman (1876) connects all three fragments with that projected poem.]

I

Those whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil,
Nor custom, queen of many slaves, makes blind,
Have ever grieved that man should be the spoil
Of his own weakness, and with earnest mind
Fed hopes of its redemption; these recur
Chastened by deathful victory now, and find
Foundations in this foulest age, and stir
Me whom they cheer to be their minister.

Otho.—13 bring *cj. Garnett*; buy *1839, 1st ed.*; wring *cj. Rossetti.*

II

Dark is the realm of grief: but human things
Those may not know who cannot weep for them.

. . . .

III

Once more descend
The shadows of my soul upon mankind,
For to those hearts with which they never blend,
Thoughts are but shadows which the flashing mind
From the swift clouds which track its flight of fire,
Casts on the gloomy world it leaves behind.

. . . .

'O THAT A CHARIOT OF CLOUD WERE MINE'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

O THAT a chariot of cloud were mine!
Of cloud which the wild tempest weaves in air,
When the moon over the ocean's line
Is spreading the locks of her bright gray hair.
O that a chariot of cloud were mine!
I would sail on the waves of the billowy wind
To the mountain peak and the rocky lake,
And the . . .

FRAGMENT: TO A FRIEND RELEASED FROM PRISON

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

For me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble
In my faint eyes, and that my heart beat fast
With feelings which make rapture pain resemble,
Yet, from thy voice that falsehood starts aghast,
I thank thee—let the tyrant keep
His chains and tears, yea, let him weep
With rage to see thee freshly risen,
Like strength from slumber, from the prison,
In which he vainly hoped the soul to bind
Which on the chains must prey that fetter humankind.

FRAGMENT: SATAN BROKEN LOOSE

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

A GOLDEN-WINGÈD Angel stood
Before the Eternal Judgement-seat:
His looks were wild, and Devils' blood
Stained his dainty hands and feet.
The Father and the Son
Knew that strife was now begun.

They knew that Satan had broken his chain,
And with millions of daemons in his train,
Was ranging over the world again.
Before the Angel had told his tale,
  A sweet and a creeping sound
  Like the rushing of wings was heard around;
And suddenly the lamps grew pale—
The lamps, before the Archangels seven,
That burn continually in Heaven.

FRAGMENT: *IGNICULUS DESIDERII*

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. This fragment is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 63.]

To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander
With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—
To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle
Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle;
To nurse the image of unfelt caresses
Till dim imagination just possesses
The half-created shadow, then all the night
Sick . . .

inability to express?
what poet wants
to express.

FRAGMENT: *AMOR AETERNUS*

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

Wealth and dominion fade into the mass
  Of the great sea of human right and wrong,
When once from our possession they must pass;
  But love, though misdirected, is among
The things which are immortal, and surpass
  All that frail stuff which will be—or which was.

FRAGMENT: THOUGHTS COME AND GO IN SOLITUDE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

My thoughts arise and fade in solitude,
  The verse that would invest them melts away
  Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day:
How beautiful they were, how firm they stood,
Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl!

Igniculus, &c.—2 unsteady *B.*; uneasy *1839, 1st ed.* 7, 8 then . . . . . Sick *B.*; *wanting, 1839, 1st ed.*

A HATE-SONG

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

A Hater he came and sat by a ditch,
And he took an old cracked lute;
And he sang a song which was more of a screech
'Gainst a woman that was a brute.

LINES TO A CRITIC

[Published by Hunt in *The Liberal*, No. III, 1823. Reprinted in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, where it is dated December, 1817.]

I

Honey from silkworms who can gather,
Or silk from the yellow bee?
The grass may grow in winter weather
As soon as hate in me.

II

Hate men who cant, and men who pray,
And men who rail like thee;
An equal passion to repay
They are not coy like me.

III

Or seek some slave of power and gold
To be thy dear heart's mate;
Thy love will move that bigot cold
Sooner than me, thy hate.

IV

A passion like the one I prove
Cannot divided be;
I hate thy want of truth and love—
How should I then hate thee?

OZYMANDIAS

[Published by Hunt in *The Examiner*, January, 1818. Reprinted with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819. There is a copy amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 46.]

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Ozymandias.—9 these words appear] this legend clear *B.*

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1817, BY MRS. SHELLEY

The very illness that oppressed, and the aspect of death which had approached so near Shelley, appear to have kindled to yet keener life the Spirit of Poetry in his heart. The restless thoughts kept awake by pain clothed themselves in verse. Much was composed during this year. The *Revolt of Islam*, written and printed, was a great effort—*Rosalind and Helen* was begun—and the fragments and poems I can trace to the same period show how full of passion and reflection were his solitary hours.

In addition to such poems as have an intelligible aim and shape, many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence. As he never wandered without a book and without implements of writing, I find many such, in his manuscript books, that scarcely bear record; while some of them, broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley's mind, and desire to trace its workings.

He projected also translating the *Hymns* of Homer; his version of several of the shorter ones remains, as well as that to Mercury already published in the *Posthumous Poems*. His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the *Hymns* of Homer and the *Iliad*, he read the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the *Symposium* of Plato, and Arrian's *Historia Indica*. In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings I find also mentioned the *Faerie Queen*; and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore, and Byron.

His life was now spent more in thought than action—he had lost the eager spirit which believed it could achieve what it projected for the benefit of mankind. And yet in the converse of daily life Shelley was far from being a melancholy man. He was eloquent when philosophy or politics or taste were the subjects of conversation. He was playful; and indulged in the wild spirit that mocked itself and others—not in bitterness, but in sport. The author of *Nightmare Abbey* seized on some points of his character and some habits of his life when he painted Scythrop. He was not addicted to 'port or madeira,' but in youth he had read of 'Illuminati and Eleutherarchs,' and believed that he possessed the power of operating an immediate change in the minds of men and the state of society. These wild dreams had faded; sorrow and adversity had struck home; but he struggled with despondency as he did with physical pain. There are few who remember him sailing paper boats, and watching the navigation of his tiny craft with eagerness—or repeating with wild energy *The Ancient Mariner*, and Southey's *Old Woman of Berkeley*; but those who do will recollect that it was in such, and in the creations of his own fancy when that was most daring and ideal, that he sheltered himself from the storms and disappointments, the pain and sorrow, that beset his life.

No words can express the anguish he felt when his elder children were torn from him. In his first resentment against the Chancellor, on the passing of the decree, he had written a curse, in which there breathes, besides haughty indignation, all the tenderness of a father's love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences.

At one time, while the question was still pending, the Chancellor had said some words that seemed to intimate that Shelley should not be permitted the care of any of his children, and for a moment he feared that our infant son would be torn from us. He did not hesitate to resolve, if such were menaced, to abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child; and I find some unfinished stanzas addressed to this son, whom afterwards we lost at Rome, written under the idea that we might suddenly be forced to cross the sea, so to preserve him. This poem, as well as the one previously quoted, were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public; they were the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the uncontrollable emotions of his heart. I ought to observe that the fourth verse of this effusion is introduced in *Rosalind and Helen*. When afterwards this child died at Rome, he wrote, *à propos* of the English burying-ground in that city: 'This spot is the repository of a sacred loss, of which the yearnings of a parent's heart are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love, as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here. I envy death the body far less than the oppressors the minds of those whom they have torn from me. The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections.'

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1818

TO THE NILE

['Found by Mr. Townshend Meyer among the papers of Leigh Hunt, [and] published in the *St. James's Magazine* for March, 1876.' (Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B.; *P. W. of P. B. S.*, Library Edition, 1876, vol. iii, p. 410.) First included among Shelley's poetical works in Mr. Forman's Library Edition, where a facsimile of the MS. is given. Composed February 4, 1818. See *Complete Works of John Keats*, ed. H. Buxton Forman, Glasgow, 1901, vol. iv, p. 76.]

Month after month the gathered rains descend
Drenching yon secret Aethiopian dells,
And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles
Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend
On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.
Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells
By Nile's aëreal urn, with rapid spells
Urging those waters to their mighty end.
O'er Egypt's land of Memory floods are level
And they are thine, O Nile—and well thou knowest
That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.
Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee,
Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES

[Composed May 4, 1818. Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a copy amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library, which supplies the last word of the fragment.]

Listen, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine,
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,

Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and gray,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm,
Shrouding . .

THE PAST

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

Wilt thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?
  Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
    And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

II

Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
  And with ghastly whispers tell
    That joy, once lost, is pain.

TO MARY ——

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

O Mary dear, that you were here
With your brown eyes bright and clear,
And your sweet voice, like a bird
Singing love to its lone mate
In the ivy bower disconsolate;
Voice the sweetest ever heard!
And your brow more . . . .
Than the   sky
Of this azure Italy.
Mary dear, come to me soon,
I am not well whilst thou art far;
As sunset to the spherèd moon,
As twilight to the western star,
Thou, belovèd, art to me.

O Mary dear, that you were here;
The Castle echo whispers 'Here!'

ON A FADED VIOLET

[Published by Hunt, *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1821. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Again reprinted, with several variants, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1821 A transcript is extant in a letter from Shelley to Sophia Stacey, dated March 7, 1820.]

I

The odour from the flower is gone
  Which like thy kisses breathed on me;
The colour from the flower is flown
  Which glowed of thee and only thee!

On a Faded Violet—1 odour] colour *1839*. 2 kisses breathed] sweet eyes smiled *1839*. 3 colour] odour *1839*. 4 glowed] breathed *1839*.

II

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart which yet is warm,
With cold and silent rest.

III

I weep,—my tears revive it not!
I sigh,—it breathes no more on me;
Its mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine should be.

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

OCTOBER, 1818.

[Composed at Este, October, 1818. Published with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819. Amongst the late Mr. Fredk. Locker-Lampson's collections at Rowfant there is a MS. of the lines (167–205) on Byron, interpolated after the completion of the poem.]

Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of Misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on—
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still
Longing with divided will,
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.
What, if there no friends will greet;
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat;
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 'twill wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no:
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins and chill
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there ~~lay~~ to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few gray rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;

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5 shrivelled] withered *1839*. 8 cold and silent *all edd.*; its cold, silent *Stacey MS.*
54 seamews *1819*; seamew's *Rossetti*.

Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughtered town,
When a king in glory rides
Through the pomp of fratricides:
Those unburied bones around
There is many a mournful sound;
There is no lament for him,
Like a sunless vapour, dim,
Who once clothed with life and thought
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony:
To such a one this morn was led,
My bark by soft winds piloted:
'Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the paean
With which the legioned rooks did hail
The sun's uprise majestical;
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Through the dewy mist they soar
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
Flecked with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starred with drops of golden rain,
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Through the broken mist they sail,
And the vapours cloven and gleaming
Follow, down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair;
Underneath Day's azure eyes
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise,
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City, thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne, among the waves
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace gate
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of Ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandoned sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way,
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
Quivering through aëreal gold,
As I now behold them here,
Would imagine not they were

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115 Sun-girt] Sea-girt *cj. Palgrave.*

Sepulchres, where human forms,
Like pollution-nourished worms,
To the corpse of greatness cling,
Murdered, and now mouldering:
But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold
All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chained like thee, ingloriously,
Thou and all thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime;
If not, perish thou and they!—
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away—
Earth can spare ye: while like flowers,
In the waste of years and hours,
From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.

Perish—let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tattered pall of time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;—
That a tempest-cleaving Swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
Chastening terror:—what though yet
Poesy's unfailing River,
Which through Albion winds forever
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred Poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled?
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own? oh, rather say
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sunlike soul?
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn,
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp by which the heart
Sees things unearthly;—so thou art,
Mighty spirit—so shall be
The City that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height;
From the sea a mist has spread,
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago.
By the skirts of that gray cloud
Many-domèd Padua proud
Stands, a peopled solitude,
'Mid the harvest-shining plain,
Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow
With the purple vintage strain,
Heaped upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest-home:
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,
Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

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165 From your dust new *1819*; From thy dust shall *Rowfant MS.* (*heading of ll. 167–205*). 175 songs *1819*; sons *cj. Forman.*

Padua, thou within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Played at dice for Ezzelin,
Till Death cried, "I win, I win!"
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,
Over all between the Po
And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian.
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, ay, long before,
Both have ruled from shore to shore,—
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor, whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray:
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth:
Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by Tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells,
One light flame among the brakes,
While the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born:
The spark beneath his feet is dead,
He starts to see the flames it fed
Howling through the darkened sky
With a myriad tongues victoriously,
And sinks down in fear: so thou,
O Tyranny, beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
Grovel on the earth; ay, hide
In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now:
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvèd star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of Heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath, the leaves unsodden
Where the infant Frost has trodden
With his morning-wingèd feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;
And my spirit which so long
Darkened this swift stream of song,—
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky:
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odour, or the soul of all
Which from Heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon,
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs:
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like wingèd winds had borne

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278 a *1819*; *wanting*, *1839*.

To that silent isle, which lies
Mid remembered agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being)
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of Life and Agony:
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folded wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine:
We may live so happy there,
That the Spirits of the Air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing Paradise
The polluting multitude;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies,
And the love which heals all strife
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood:
They, not it, would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

SCENE FROM 'TASSO'

[Composed, 1818. Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Maddalo, *a Courtier*.
Malpiglio, *a Poet*.
Pigna, *a Minister*.
Albano, *an Usher*.

Maddalo. No access to the Duke! You have not said
That the Count Maddalo would speak with him?
Pigna. Did you inform his Grace that Signor Pigna
Waits with state papers for his signature?
Malpiglio. The Lady Leonora cannot know
That I have written a sonnet to her fame,
In which I   Venus and Adonis.
You should not take my gold and serve me not.
Albano. In truth I told her, and she smiled and said,
'If I am Venus, thou, coy Poesy,
Art the Adonis whom I love, and he
The Erymanthian boar that wounded him.
O trust to me, Signor Malpiglio,
Those nods and smiles were favours worth the zechin.
Malpiglio. The words are twisted in some double sense
That I reach not: the smiles fell not on me.
Pigna. How are the Duke and Duchess occupied?
Albano. Buried in some strange talk. The Duke was leaning,
His finger on his brow, his lips unclosed.
The Princess sate within the window-seat,
And so her face was hid; but on her knee

Her hands were clasped, veinèd, and pale as snow,
And quivering—young Tasso, too, was there.
Maddalo. Thou seest on whom from thine own worshipped heaven
Thou drawest down smiles—they did not rain on thee.
Malpiglio. Would they were parching lightnings for his sake
On whom they fell!

SONG FOR 'TASSO'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

I LOVED—alas! our life is love;
But when we cease to breathe and move
I do suppose love ceases too.
I thought, but not as now I do,
Keen thoughts and bright of linkèd lore,
Of all that men had thought before,
And all that Nature shows, and more.

II

And still I love and still I think,
But strangely, for my heart can drink
The dregs of such despair, and live,
And love; . . .
And if I think, my thoughts come fast,
I mix the present with the past,
And each seems uglier than the last.

III

Sometimes I see before me flee
A silver spirit's form, like thee,
O Leonora, and I sit
. . . still watching it,
Till by the grated casement's ledge
It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge
Breathes o'er the breezy streamlet's edge.

INVOCATION TO MISERY

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Sept. 8, 1832. Reprinted (as *Misery, a Fragment*) by Mrs. Shelley, *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Our text is that of 1839. A pencil copy of this poem is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 38. The readings of this copy are indicated by the letter *B.* in the footnotes.]

I

COME, be happy!—sit near me,
Shadow-vested Misery:
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation—deified!

II

Come, be happy!—sit near me:
Sad as I may seem to thee,
I am happier far than thou,
Lady, whose imperial brow
Is endiademed with woe.

Invocation to Misery—1 near *B.*, *1839*; by *1832*. 8 happier far] merrier yet *B.*

III

Misery! we have known each other,
Like a sister and a brother
Living in the same lone home,
Many years—we must live some
Hours or ages yet to come.

IV

'Tis an evil lot, and yet
Let us make the best of it;
If love can live when pleasure dies,
We two will love, till in our eyes
This heart's Hell seem Paradise.

V

Come, be happy!—lie thee down
On the fresh grass newly mown,
Where the Grasshopper doth sing
Merrily—one joyous thing
In a world of sorrowing!

VI

There our tent shall be the willow,
And mine arm shall be thy pillow;
Sounds and odours, sorrowful
Because they once were sweet, shall lull
Us to slumber, deep and dull.

VII

Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter
With a love thou darest not utter.
Thou art murmuring—thou art weeping—
Is thine icy bosom leaping
While my burning heart lies sleeping?

VIII

Kiss me;—oh! thy lips are cold:
Round my neck thine arms enfold—
They are soft, but chill and dead;
And thy tears upon my head
Burn like points of frozen lead.

IX

Hasten to the bridal bed—
Underneath the grave 'tis spread:
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid—
We may rest, and none forbid.

X

Clasp me till our hearts be grown
Like two shadows into one;
Till this dreadful transport may
Like a vapour fade away,
In the sleep that lasts alway.

XI

We may dream, in that long sleep,
That we are not those who weep;
E'en as Pleasure dreams of thee,
Life-deserting Misery,
Thou mayst dream of her with me.

XII

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,
At the shadows of the earth,
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,
Which, like spectres wrapped in shrouds,
Pass o'er night in multitudes.

XIII

All the wide world, beside us,
Show like multitudinous
Puppets passing from a scene;
What but mockery can they mean,
Where I am—where thou hast been?

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15 Hours or] Years and *1832*. 17 best] most *1832*. 19 We two will] We will *1832*. 27 mine arm shall be thy *B.*, *1839*; thine arm shall be my *1832*. 33 *represented by asterisks*, *1832*. 34, 35 Thou art murmuring, thou art weeping, Whilst my burning bosom's leaping *1832*; Was thine icy bosom leaping While my burning heart was sleeping *B.* 40 frozen *1832*, *1839*, *B.*; molten *cj. Forman*. 44 be] is *B.* 47 shadows] lovers *1832*, *B.* 59 which *B.*, *1839*; that *1832*. 62 Show] Are *1832*, *B.* 63 Puppets passing] Shadows shifting *1832*; Shadows passing *B.* 64, 65 *So B.*; What but mockery may they mean? Where am I?—Where thou hast been *1832*.

STANZAS – one of Shelley's best lyrics

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, where it is dated 'December, 1818.' A draft of stanza i is amongst the Boscombe MSS. (Garnett).]

I

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light,
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,—
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

4 might *Boscombe MS., Medwin 1847*; light *1824, 1839*. 5 The . . . light *Boscombe MS., 1839, Medwin 1847*; *omitted, 1824*. moist earth *Boscombe MS.*; moist air *1839*; west wind *Medwin 1847*. 17 measured *1824*; mingled *1847*. 18 did any heart now *1824*; if any heart could *Medwin 1847*. 31 the *1824*; this *Medwin 1847*. 36 dying *1824*; outworn *Medwin 1847*.

V

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament—for I am one
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE

[Published in part (1–67) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; the remainder (68–70) by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

A woodman whose rough heart was out of tune
(I think such hearts yet never came to good)
Hated to hear, under the stars or moon,—

One nightingale in an interfluous wood
Satiate the hungry dark with melody;—
And as a vale is watered by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,
The singing of that happy nightingale
In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening till the star of dawn may fail,
Was interfused upon the silentness;
The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss
Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear
Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretched in its ruggèd cave,
And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,
And every silver moth fresh from the grave

Which is its cradle—ever from below
Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,
To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,
As if it were a lamp of earthly light,
Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

Itself how low, how high beyond all height
The heaven where it would perish!—and every form
That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm
Girt as with an interminable zone,
Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
Out of their dreams; harmony became love
In every soul but one.

. . . . . .

And so this man returned with axe and saw
At evening close from killing the tall treen,
The soul of whom by Nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green
The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,
Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene

With jaggèd leaves,—and from the forest tops
Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft
Fast showers of aëreal water-drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,
Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;—
Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness
Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers
Hang like moist clouds:—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers,
Like a vast fane in a metropolis,
Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries
In which there is religion—and the mute
Persuasion of unkindled melodies,

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute
Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast
Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves, ere it has passed
To such brief unison as on the brain
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,
One accent never to return again.

. . . .

The world is full of Woodmen who expel
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

MARENGHI[1]

[Published in part (stanzas vii–xv) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; stanzas i–xxviii by W. M. Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. The Boscombe MS.—evidently a first draft—from which (through Dr. Garnett) Rossetti derived the text of 1870 is now at the Bodleian, and has recently been collated by Mr. C. D. Locock, to whom the enlarged and emended text here printed is owing. The substitution, in title and text, of *Marenghi* for *Mazenghi* (1824) is due to Rossetti. Here as elsewhere in the footnotes *B.* = the Bodleian MS.]

I

Let those who pine in pride or in revenge,
  Or think that ill for ill should be repaid,
Who barter wrong for wrong, until the exchange
  Ruins the merchants of such thriftless trade,
Visit the tower of Vado, and unlearn
Such bitter faith beside Marenghi's urn.

II

A massy tower yet overhangs the town,
  A scattered group of ruined dwellings now . . . .

. . . .

III

Another scene ere wise Etruria knew
  Its second ruin through internal strife,
And tyrants through the breach of discord threw
  The chain which binds and kills. As death to life,
As winter to fair flowers (though some be poison)
So Monarchy succeeds to Freedom's foison.

IV

In Pisa's church a cup of sculptured gold
  Was brimming with the blood of feuds forsworn:
A Sacrament more holy ne'er of old
  Etrurians mingled mid the shades forlorn
Of moon-illumined forests, when . . . .

V

And reconciling factions wet their lips
  With that dread wine, and swear to keep each spirit
Undarkened by their country's last eclipse . . . .

. . . .

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3 Who *B.*; Or *1870.* 6 Marenghi's *1870*; Mazenghi's *B.* 7 town *1870*; sea *B.* 8 ruined *1870*; squalid *B.* (*'the whole line is cancelled,' Locock*). 11 threw *1870*; *cancelled, B.* 17 A Sacrament more *B.*; At Sacrament: more *1870.* 18 mid *B.*; with *1870.* 19 forests when . . . *B.*; forests. *1870.*

[1] This fragment refers to an event told in Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, which occurred during the war when Florence finally subdued Pisa, and reduced it to a province.—[Mrs. Shelley's Note, 1824.]

VI

Was Florence the liberticide? that band
Of free and glorious brothers who had planted,
Like a green isle mid Aethiopian sand,
A nation amid slaveries, disenchanted
Of many impious faiths—wise, just—do they,
Does Florence, gorge the sated tyrants' prey?

VII

O foster-nurse of man's abandoned glory,
Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in splendour;
Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story,
As ocean its wrecked fanes, severe yet tender:—
The light-invested angel Poesy
Was drawn from the dim world to welcome thee.

VIII

And thou in painting didst transcribe all taught
By loftiest meditations; marble knew
The sculptor's fearless soul—and as he wrought,
The grace of his own power and freedom grew.
And more than all, heroic, just, sublime,
Thou wert among the false . . . was this thy crime?

IX

Yes; and on Pisa's marble walls the twine
Of direst weeds hangs garlanded—the snake
Inhabits its wrecked palaces;—in thine
A beast of subtler venom now doth make
Its lair, and sits amid their glories overthrown,
And thus thy victim's fate is as thine own.

X

The sweetest flowers are ever frail and rare,
And love and freedom blossom but to wither;
And good and ill like vines entangled are,
So that their grapes may oft be plucked together;—
Divide the vintage ere thou drink, then make
Thy heart rejoice for dead Marenghi's sake.

X a

[Albert] Marenghi was a Florentine;
If he had wealth, or children, or a wife
Or friends, [or farm] or cherished thoughts which twine
The sights and sounds of home with life's own life
Of these he was despoiled and Florence sent . . . .

. . . .

23, 24 that band Of free and glorious brothers who had *1870*; *omitted*, *B.* 25 a *1870*; one *B.* 27 wise, just—do they *1870*; *omitted*, *B.* 28 Does *1870*; Doth *B.* prey *1870*; spoil *B.* 33 angel *1824*; Herald [?] *B.* 34 to welcome thee *1824*; *cancelled for* . . . by thee *B.* 42 direst *1824*; Desert *B.* 45 sits amid *1824*; amid *cancelled for* soils (?) *B.* 53–57 Albert . . . sent *B.*; *omitted 1824, 1870.* Albert *cancelled B.*: Pietro *is the correct name.* 53 Marenghi] Mazenghi *B.* 55 farm *doubtful*: *perh.* fame (*Locock*).

XI

No record of his crime remains in story,
But if the morning bright as evening shone,
It was some high and holy deed, by glory
Pursued into forgetfulness, which won
From the blind crowd he made secure and free
The patriot's meed, toil, death, and infamy.

XII

For when by sound of trumpet was declared
A price upon his life, and there was set
A penalty of blood on all who shared
So much of water with him as might wet
His lips, which speech divided not—he went
Alone, as you may guess, to banishment.

XIII

Amid the mountains, like a hunted beast,
He hid himself, and hunger, toil, and cold,
Month after month endured; it was a feast
Whene'er he found those globes of deep-red gold
Which in the woods the strawberry-tree doth bear,
Suspended in their emerald atmosphere.

XIV

And in the roofless huts of vast morasses,
Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,
All overgrown with reeds and long rank grasses,
And hillocks heaped of moss-inwoven turf,
And where the huge and speckled aloe made,
Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,—

XV

He housed himself. There is a point of strand
Near Vado's tower and town; and on one side
The treacherous marsh divides it from the land,
Shadowed by pine and ilex forests wide,
And on the other, creeps eternally,
Through muddy weeds, the shallow sullen sea.

XVI

Here the earth's breath is pestilence, and few
But things whose nature is at war with life—
Snakes and ill worms—endure its mortal dew.
The trophies of the clime's victorious strife—
And ringed horns which the buffalo did wear,
And the wolf's dark gray scalp who tracked him there.

---

62 he *1824*; thus *B*. 70 Amid the mountains *1824*; Mid desert mountains [?] *B*. 71 toil, and cold] cold and toil *edd. 1824, 1839*. 92, 93 And . . . there *B*. (*see Editor's Note*); White bones, and locks of dun and yellow hair, And ringèd horns which buffaloes did wear— *1870*.

XVII

And at the utmost point . . . stood there
The relics of a reed-inwoven cot,
Thatched with broad flags. An outlawed murderer
Had lived seven days there: the pursuit was hot
When he was cold. The birds that were his grave
Fell dead after their feast in Vado's wave.

XVIII

There must have burned within Marenghi's breast
That fire, more warm and bright than life and hope,
(Which to the martyr makes his dungeon . . . .
More joyous than free heaven's majestic cope
To his oppressor), warring with decay,—
Or he could ne'er have lived years, day by day.

XIX

Nor was his state so lone as you might think.
He had tamed every newt and snake and toad,
And every seagull which sailed down to drink
Those freshes ere the death-mist went abroad.
And each one, with peculiar talk and play,
Wiled, not untaught, his silent time away.

XX

And the marsh-meteors, like tame beasts, at night
Came licking with blue tongues his veinèd feet;
And he would watch them, as, like spirits bright,
In many entangled figures quaint and sweet
To some enchanted music they would dance—
Until they vanished at the first moon-glance.

XXI

He mocked the stars by grouping on each weed
The summer dew-globes in the golden dawn;
And, ere the hoar-frost languished, he could read
Its pictured path, as on bare spots of lawn
Its delicate brief touch in silver weaves
The likeness of the wood's remembered leaves.

XXII

And many a fresh Spring morn would he awaken—
While yet the unrisen sun made glow, like iron
Quivering in crimson fire, the peaks unshaken
Of mountains and blue isles which did environ
With air-clad crags that plain of land and sea,—
And feel liberty.

94 at the utmost point *1870*; *cancelled for* when (where?) *B.* 95 reed *B.*; weed *1870.* 99 after *B.*; upon *1870.* 100 burned within Marenghi's breast *B.*; lived within Marenghi's heart *1870.* 101 and *B.*; or *1870.* 103 free *B.*; the *1870.* 109 freshes *B.*; *omitted, 1870.* 118 by *1870*; with *B.* 119 dew-globes *B.*; dewdrops *1870.* 120 languished *B.*; vanished *1870.* 121 path, as on [bare] *B.*; footprints, as on *1870.* 122 silver *B.*; silence *1870.*

XXIII

And in the moonless nights, when the dun ocean
  Heaved underneath wide heaven, star-impearled,
Starting from dreams . . .
  Communed with the immeasurable world;
And felt his life beyond his limbs dilated,
Till his mind grew like that it contemplated.

XXIV

His food was the wild fig and strawberry;
  The milky pine-nuts which the autumn-blast
Shakes into the tall grass; or such small fry
  As from the sea by winter-storms are cast;
And the coarse bulbs of iris-flowers he found
Knotted in clumps under the spongy ground.

XXV

And so were kindled powers and thoughts which made
  His solitude less dark. When memory came
(For years gone by leave each a deepening shade),
  His spirit basked in its internal flame,—
As, when the black storm hurries round at night,
The fisher basks beside his red firelight.

XXVI

Yet human hopes and cares and faiths and errors,
  Like billows unawakened by the wind,
Slept in Marenghi still; but that all terrors,
  Weakness, and doubt, had withered in his mind.
His couch . . .

. . . .

XXVII

And, when he saw beneath the sunset's planet
  A black ship walk over the crimson ocean,—
Its pennon streaming on the blasts that fan it,
  Its sails and ropes all tense and without motion,
Like the dark ghost of the unburied even
Striding athwart the orange-coloured heaven,—

XXVIII

The thought of his own kind who made the soul
  Which sped that wingèd shape through night and day,—
The thought of his own country . . .

. . . .

130 And in the moonless nights *1870*; *cancelled*, *B.* dun *B.*; dim *1870.* 131 Heaved *1870*; *cancelled*, *B.* wide *B.*; the *1870.* star-impearled *B.*; *omitted*, *1870.* 132 Starting from dreams *1870*; *cancelled for* He *B.* 137 autumn *B.*; autumnal *1870.* 138 or *B.*; and *1870.* 155 pennon *B.*; pennons *1870.* 158 athwart *B.*; across *1870.*

SONNET

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Our text is that of the *Poetical Works*, 1839.]

Lift not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread,—behind, lurk Fear
And Hope, twin Destinies; who ever weave 5
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.
I knew one who had lifted it—he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve. 10
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

FRAGMENT: TO BYRON

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

O mighty mind, in whose deep stream this age
Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm,
Why dost thou curb not thine own sacred rage?

Byron's inability to master his own emotion

FRAGMENT: APOSTROPHE TO SILENCE

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862. A transcript by Mrs. Shelley, given to Charles Cowden Clarke, presents one or two variants.]

Silence! Oh, well are Death and Sleep and Thou
Three brethren named, the guardians gloomy-winged
Of one abyss, where life, and truth, and joy
Are swallowed up—yet spare me, Spirit, pity me,
Until the sounds I hear become my soul, 5
And it has left these faint and weary limbs,
To track along the lapses of the air
This wandering melody until it rests
Among lone mountains in some . . .

FRAGMENT: THE LAKE'S MARGIN

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, 1870.]

The fierce beasts of the woods and wildernesses
Track not the steps of him who drinks of it;
For the light breezes, which for ever fleet
Around its margin, heap the sand thereon.

Sonnet—6 Their . . . drear *1839*; The shadows, which the world calls substance, there *1824*. 7 who had lifted *1839*; who lifted *1824*. *Apostrophe*—4 Spirit *1862*; O Spirit *C.C.C. MS.* 8 This wandering melody *1862*; These wandering melodies . . . *C.C.C. MS.*

FRAGMENT: 'MY HEAD IS WILD WITH WEEPING'

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, 1870.]

My head is wild with weeping for a grief
Which is the shadow of a gentle mind.
I walk into the air (but no relief
To seek,—or haply, if I sought, to find;
It came unsought);—to wonder that a chief
Among men's spirits should be cold and blind.

FRAGMENT: THE VINE-SHROUD

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, 1870.]

Flourishing vine, whose kindling clusters glow
Beneath the autumnal sun, none taste of thee;
For thou dost shroud a ruin, and below
The rotting bones of dead antiquity.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1818, BY MRS. SHELLEY

We often hear of persons disappointed by a first visit to Italy. This was not Shelley's case. The aspect of its nature, its sunny sky, its majestic storms, of the luxuriant vegetation of the country, and the noble marble-built cities, enchanted him. The sight of the works of art was full enjoyment and wonder. He had not studied pictures or statues before; he now did so with the eye of taste, that referred not to the rules of schools, but to those of Nature and truth. The first entrance to Rome opened to him a scene of remains of antique grandeur that far surpassed his expectations; and the unspeakable beauty of Naples and its environs added to the impression he received of the transcendent and glorious beauty of Italy.

Our winter was spent at Naples. Here he wrote the fragments of *Marenghi* and *The Woodman and the Nightingale*, which he afterwards threw aside. At this time, Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy,—and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness. One looks back with unspeakable regret and gnawing remorse to such periods; fancying that, had one been more alive to the nature of his feelings, and more attentive to soothe them, such would not have existed. And yet, enjoying as he appeared to do every sight or influence of earth or sky, it was difficult to imagine that any melancholy he showed was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.

We lived in utter solitude. And such is often not the nurse of cheerfulness; for then, at least with those who have been exposed to adversity, the mind broods over its sorrows too intently; while the society of the enlightened, the witty, and the wise, enables us to forget ourselves by making us the sharers of the thoughts of others, which is a portion of the philosophy of happiness. Shelley never liked society in numbers,—it harassed and wearied him;

but neither did he like loneliness, and usually, when alone, sheltered himself against memory and reflection in a book. But, with one or two whom he loved, he gave way to wild and joyous spirits, or in more serious conversation expounded his opinions with vivacity and eloquence. If an argument arose, no man ever argued better. He was clear, logical, and earnest, in supporting his own views; attentive, patient, and impartial, while listening to those on the adverse side. Had not a wall of prejudice been raised at this time between him and his countrymen, how many would have sought the acquaintance of one whom to know was to love and to revere! How many of the more enlightened of his contemporaries have since regretted that they did not seek him! how very few knew his worth while he lived! and, of those few, several were withheld by timidity or envy from declaring their sense of it. But no man was ever more enthusiastically loved—more looked up to, as one superior to his fellows in intellectual endowments and moral worth, by the few who knew him well, and had sufficient nobleness of soul to appreciate his superiority. His excellence is now acknowledged; but, even while admitted, not duly appreciated. For who, except those who were acquainted with him, can imagine his unwearied benevolence, his generosity, his systematic forbearance? And still less is his vast superiority in intellectual attainments sufficiently understood—his sagacity, his clear understanding, his learning, his prodigious memory. All these, as displayed in conversation, were known to few while he lived, and are now silent in the tomb:

> 'Ahi orbo mondo ingratò!
> Gran cagion hai di dever pianger meco;
> Chè quel ben ch' era in te, perdut' hai
> seco.'

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1819

LINES WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH ADMINISTRATION

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Dec. 8, 1832; reprinted, *P. W.*, 1839. There is a transcript amongst the Harvard MSS., and another in the possession of Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn. Variants from these two sources are given by Professor Woodberry, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, *Centenary Edition*, 1893, vol. iii, pp. 225, 226. The transcripts are referred to in our footnotes as *Harvard* and *Fred.* respectively.]

I

Corpses are cold in the tomb;
Stones on the pavement are dumb;
Abortions are dead in the womb,
And their mothers look pale—like the death-white shore
Of Albion, free no more.

II

Her sons are as stones in the way—
They are masses of senseless clay—
They are trodden, and move not away,—
The abortion with which *she* travaileth
Is Liberty, smitten to death.

---

4 death-white *Harvard*, *Fred.*; white *1832*, *1839*.

III

Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor!
For thy victim is no redresser;
Thou art sole lord and possessor
Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions—they pave
Thy path to the grave.

IV

Hearest thou the festival din
Of Death, and Destruction, and Sin,
And Wealth crying *Havoc!* within?
'Tis the bacchanal triumph that makes Truth dumb,
Thine Epithalamium.

V

Ay, marry thy ghastly wife!
Let Fear and Disquiet and Strife
Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life!
Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant! and Hell be thy guide
To the bed of the bride!

SONG TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I

Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

II

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

III

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

IV

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

V

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

VI

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth,—let no impostor heap;
Weave robes,—let not the idle wear;
Forge arms,—in your defence to bear.

VII

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells;
In halls ye deck another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

VIII

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre.

---

16 festival *Harvard, Fred.*, *1839*; festal *1832*. 19 that *Fred.*; which *Harvard*, *1832*. 22 Disquiet *Harvard*, *Fred.*, *1839*; Disgust *1832*. 24 Hell *Fred.*; God *Harvard*, *1832*, *1839*. 25 the bride *Harvard*, *Fred.*, *1839*; thy bride *1832*.

SIMILES FOR TWO POLITICAL CHARACTERS OF 1819

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Aug. 25, 1832; reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839. Our title is that of 1839, 2nd ed. The poem is found amongst the Harvard MSS., headed *To S——th and C——gh.*]

I

As from an ancestral oak
Two empty ravens sound their clarion,
Yell by yell, and croak by croak,
When they scent the noonday smoke
Of fresh human carrion:—

II

As two gibbering night-birds flit
From their bowers of deadly yew
Through the night to frighten it,
When the moon is in a fit,
And the stars are none, or few:—

III

As a shark and dog-fish wait
Under an Atlantic isle,
For the negro-ship, whose freight
Is the theme of their debate,
Wrinkling their red gills the while—

IV

Are ye, two vultures sick for battle,
Two scorpions under one wet stone,
Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle,
Two crows perched on the murrained cattle,
Two vipers tangled into one.

FRAGMENT: TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

People of England, ye who toil and groan,
Who reap the harvests which are not your own,
Who weave the clothes which your oppressors wear,
And for your own take the inclement air;
Who build warm houses . . .
And are like gods who give them all they have,
And nurse them from the cradle to the grave . . .

. . . .

FRAGMENT: 'WHAT MEN GAIN FAIRLY[1]'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

What men gain fairly—that they should possess,
And children may inherit idleness,
From him who earns it—This is understood;
Private injustice may be general good.
But he who gains by base and armèd wrong,
Or guilty fraud, or base compliances,
May be despoiled; even as a stolen dress
Is stripped from a convicted thief, and he
Left in the nakedness of infamy.

Similes—7 yew *1832*; hue *1839*.

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[1] Perhaps connected with that immediately preceding (Forman).—Ed.

A NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I

God prosper, speed, and save,
God raise from England's grave
Her murdered Queen!
Pave with swift victory
The steps of Liberty,
Whom Britons own to be
Immortal Queen.

II

See, she comes throned on high,
On swift Eternity!
God save the Queen!
Millions on millions wait,
Firm, rapid, and elate,
On her majestic state!
God save the Queen!

III

She is Thine own pure soul
Moulding the mighty whole,—
God save the Queen!
She is Thine own deep love
Rained down from Heaven above,—
Wherever she rest or move,
God save our Queen!

IV

'Wilder her enemies
In their own dark disguise,—
God save our Queen!
All earthly things that dare
Her sacred name to bear,
Strip them, as kings are, bare;
God save the Queen!

V

Be her eternal throne
Built in our hearts alone—
God save the Queen!
Let the oppressor hold
Canopied seats of gold;
She sits enthroned of old
O'er our hearts Queen.

VI

Lips touched by seraphim
Breathe out the choral hymn
'God save the Queen!'
Sweet as if angels sang,
Loud as that trumpet's clang
Wakening the world's dead gang,—
God save the Queen!

SONNET: ENGLAND IN 1819

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,—
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

AN ODE

WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.]

ARISE, arise, arise!
There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;
Be your wounds like eyes
To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.
What other grief were it just to pay?
Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;
Who said they were slain on the battle day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken!
The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;
Be the cold chains shaken
To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:
Their bones in the grave will start and move,
When they hear the voices of those they love,
Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner!
When Freedom is riding to conquest by:
Though the slaves that fan her
Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh.
And ye who attend her imperial car,
Lift not your hands in the banded war,
But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory,
To those who have greatly suffered and done!
Never name in story
Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown:
Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:
Hide the blood-stains now
With hues which sweet Nature has made divine:
Green strength, azure hope, and eternity:
But let not the pansy among them be;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

CANCELLED STANZA

[Published in *The Times* (Rossetti).]

GATHER, O gather,
Foeman and friend in love and peace!
Waves sleep together
When the blasts that called them to battle, cease.
For fangless Power grown tame and mild
Is at play with Freedom's fearless child—
The dove and the serpent reconciled!

ODE TO HEAVEN

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820. Dated 'Florence, December, 1819' in Harvard MS. (Woodberry). A transcript exists amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., p. 39.]

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

First Spirit.

Palace-roof of cloudless nights!
Paradise of golden lights!
Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, and which wert then
Of the Present and the Past,
Of the eternal Where and When,
Presence-chamber, temple, home,
Ever-canopying dome,
Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth, and all earth's company;
Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;
And green worlds that glide along;
And swift stars with flashing tresses;
And icy moons most cold and bright,
And mighty suns beyond the night,
Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven! for thou art the abode
Of that Power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
Their unremaining gods and they
Like a river roll away:
Thou remainest such—alway!—

Second Spirit.

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
Round which its young fancies clamber,
Like weak insects in a cave,
Lighted up by stalactites;
But the portal of the grave,
Where a world of new delights
Will make thy best glories seem
But a dim and noonday gleam
From the shadow of a dream!

Third Spirit.

Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
At your presumption, atom-born!
What is Heaven? and what are ye
Who its brief expanse inherit?
What are suns and spheres which flee
With the instinct of that Spirit
Of which ye are but a part?
Drops which Nature's mighty heart
Drives through thinnest veins! Depart!

What is Heaven? a globe of dew,
Filling in the morning new
Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken
On an unimagined world:
Constellated suns unshaken,
Orbits measureless, are furled
In that frail and fading sphere,
With ten millions gathered there,
To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF THE ODE TO HEAVEN

[Published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903.]

The [living frame which sustains my soul]
Is [sinking beneath the fierce control]
Down through the lampless deep of song
I am drawn and driven along—

When a Nation screams aloud
Like an eagle from the cloud
When a . . .

. . . .

When the night . . .

. . . .

Watch the look askance and old—
See neglect, and falsehood fold. . . .

ODE TO THE WEST WIND[1]

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.]

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

---

[1] This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams, gentle to

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers tumult
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear,
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

AN EXHORTATION

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820. Dated 'Pisa, April, 1820' in Harvard MS. (Woodberry), but assigned by Mrs. Shelley to 1819.]

Chameleons feed on light and air :
Poets' food is love and fame :
If in this wide world of care
Poets could but find the same
With as little toil as they,
Would they ever change their hue
As the light chameleons do,
Suiting it to every ray
Twenty times a day?

Poets are on this cold earth,
As chameleons might be,
Hidden from their early birth
In a cave beneath the sea ;
Where light is, chameleons change :
Where love is not, poets do :
Fame is love disguised : if few
Find either, never think it strange
That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind :
If bright chameleons should devour
Any food but beams and wind,
They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
Oh, refuse the boon!

THE INDIAN SERENADE

[Published, with the title, *Song written for an Indian Air*, in *The Liberal*, ii, 1822. Reprinted (*Lines to an Indian Air*) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. The poem is included in the Harvard MS. book, and there is a description by Robert Browning of an autograph copy presenting some variations from the text of 1824. See Leigh Hunt's *Correspondence*, ii, pp. 264-8.]

I

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright :
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

II

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The Champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart ;—
As I must on thine,
Oh, belovèd as thou art!

III

Oh lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast ;—
Oh! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

CANCELLED PASSAGE

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*, 1870.]

O pillow cold and wet with tears!
Thou breathest sleep no more!

Indian Serenade.—3 *Harvard MS. omits* When. 4 shining] burning *Harvard MS.*, *1822.* 7 Hath led *Browning MS., 1822* ; Has borne *Harvard MS.* ; Has led *1824.* 11 The Champak *Harvard MS., 1822, 1824* ; And the Champak's *Browning MS.* 15 As I must on *1822, 1824* ; As I must die on *Harvard MS., 1839, 1st ed.* 16 Oh, belovèd *Browning MS., Harvard MS., 1839, 1st ed.* ; Belovèd *1822, 1824.* 23 press it to thine own *Browning MS.* ; press it close to thine *Harvard MS., 1824, 1839, 1st ed.*; press me to thine own, *1822.*

TO SOPHIA [MISS STACEY]

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*, 1870.]

I

Thou art fair, and few are fairer
  Of the Nymphs of earth or ocean;
They are robes that fit the wearer—
  Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion
Ever falls and shifts and glances
As the life within them dances.

II

Thy deep eyes, a double Planet,
  Gaze the wisest into madness
With soft clear fire,—the winds that fan it
  Are those thoughts of tender gladness
Which, like zephyrs on the billow,
Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

III

If, whatever face thou paintest
  In those eyes, grows pale with pleasure,
If the fainting soul is faintest
  When it hears thy harp's wild measure,
Wonder not that when thou speakest
Of the weak my heart is weakest.

IV

As dew beneath the wind of morning,
  As the sea which whirlwinds waken,
As the birds at thunder's warning,
  As aught mute yet deeply shaken,
As one who feels an unseen spirit
Is my heart when thine is near it.

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Works*, 1824. The fragment included in the Harvard MS. book.]

(With what truth may I say—
  Roma! Roma! Roma!
Non è più come era prima!)

I

My lost William, thou in whom
  Some bright spirit lived, and did
That decaying robe consume
  Which its lustre faintly hid,—
Here its ashes find a tomb,
  But beneath this pyramid
Thou art not—if a thing divine
Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
Is thy mother's grief and mine.

II

Where art thou, my gentle child?
  Let me think thy spirit feeds,
With its life intense and mild,
  The love of living leaves and weeds
Among these tombs and ruins wild;—
  Let me think that through low seeds
Of sweet flowers and sunny grass
Into their hues and scents may pass
A portion——

To William Shelley.—Motto 1 may I *Harvard MS.*; I may *1824.* 12 With *Harvard MS.*, *Mrs. Shelley, 1847*; Within *1824, 1839.* 16 Of sweet *Harvard MS.*; Of the sweet *1824, 1839.*

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

Thy little footsteps on the sands
  Of a remote and lonely shore;
The twinkling of thine infant hands,
  Where now the worm will feed no more;
Thy mingled look of love and glee
When we returned to gaze on thee—

TO MARY SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

My dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone,
And left me in this dreary world alone?
Thy form is here indeed—a lovely one—
But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road,
That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode;
Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair,
                                        Where
For thine own sake I cannot follow thee.

TO MARY SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

        The world is dreary,
        And I am weary
Of wandering on without thee, Mary;
        A joy was erewhile
        In thy voice and thy smile,
And 'tis gone, when I should be gone too, Mary.

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
  Upon the cloudy mountain-peak supine;
Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;
  Its horror and its beauty are divine.
Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie
  Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine,
Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
The agonies of anguish and of death.

II

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
  Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone,
Whereon the lineaments of that dead face
  Are graven, till the characters be grown
Into itself, and thought no more can trace;
  'Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown

On the Medusa.—5 seems *1839*; seem *1824*.   6 shine] shrine *1824*, *1839*.

Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

III

And from its head as from one body grow,
As grass out of a watery rock,
Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
And their long tangles in each other lock,
And with unending involutions show
Their mailèd radiance, as it were to mock
The torture and the death within, and saw
The solid air with many a raggèd jaw.

IV

And, from a stone beside, a poisonous eft
Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes;
Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft
Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise
Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft,
And he comes hastening like a moth that hies
After a taper; and the midnight sky
Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

V

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror;
For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
Kindled by that inextricable error,
Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
Become a and ever-shifting mirror
Of all the beauty and the terror there—
A woman's countenance, with serpent-locks,
Gazing in death on Heaven from those wet rocks.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

[Published by Leigh Hunt, *The Indicator*, December 22, 1819. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Included in the Harvard MS. book, where it is headed *An Anacreontic*, and dated 'January, 1820.' Written by Shelley in a copy of Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1819, and presented to Sophia Stacey, December 29, 1820.]

I

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine?—

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?

---

26 those *1824*; these *1839*. *Love's Philosophy.*—3 mix for ever *1819, Stacey MS.*; meet together, *Harvard MS.* 7 In one spirit meet and *Stacey MS.*; In one another's being *1819, Harvard MS.* 11 No sister *1824, Harvard and Stacey MSS.*; No leaf or *1819.* 12 disdained its *1824, Harvard and Stacey MSS.*; disdained to kiss its *1819.* 15 is all this sweet work *Stacey MS.*; were these examples *Harvard MS.*; are all these kissings *1819, 1824.*

FRAGMENT: 'FOLLOW TO THE DEEP WOOD'S WEEDS'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Follow to the deep wood's weeds,
Follow to the wild-briar dingle,
Where we seek to intermingle,
And the violet tells her tale
To the odour-scented gale,
For they two have enough to do
Of such work as I and you.

THE BIRTH OF PLEASURE

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

At the creation of the Earth
Pleasure, that divinest birth,
From the soil of Heaven did rise,
Wrapped in sweet wild melodies—
Like an exhalation wreathing
To the sound of air low-breathing
Through Aeolian pines, which make
A shade and shelter to the lake
Whence it rises soft and slow;
Her life-breathing [limbs] did flow
In the harmony divine
Of an ever-lengthening line
Which enwrapped her perfect form
With a beauty clear and warm.

FRAGMENT: LOVE THE UNIVERSE TO-DAY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

And who feels discord now or sorrow?
Love is the universe to-day—
These are the slaves of dim to-morrow,
Darkening Life's labyrinthine way.

FRAGMENT: 'A GENTLE STORY OF TWO LOVERS YOUNG'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

A gentle story of two lovers young,
Who met in innocence and died in sorrow,
And of one selfish heart, whose rancour clung
Like curses on them; are ye slow to borrow
The lore of truth from such a tale?
Or in this world's deserted vale,
Do ye not see a star of gladness
Pierce the shadows of its sadness,—
When ye are cold, that love is a light sent
From Heaven, which none shall quench, to cheer the innocent?

FRAGMENT: LOVE'S TENDER ATMOSPHERE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

There is a warm and gentle atmosphere
About the form of one we love, and thus
As in a tender mist our spirits are
Wrapped in the   of that which is to us
The health of life's own life—

FRAGMENT: WEDDED SOULS

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I am as a spirit who has dwelt
Within his heart of hearts, and I have felt
His feelings, and have thought his thoughts, and known
The inmost converse of his soul, the tone
Unheard but in the silence of his blood,
When all the pulses in their multitude
Image the trembling calm of summer seas.
I have unlocked the golden melodies
Of his deep soul, as with a master-key.
And loosened them and bathed myself therein—
Even as an eagle in a thunder-mist
Clothing his wings with lightning.

FRAGMENT: 'IS IT THAT IN SOME BRIGHTER SPHERE'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Is it that in some brighter sphere
We part from friends we meet with here?
Or do we see the Future pass
Over the Present's dusky glass?
Or what is that that makes us seem
To patch up fragments of a dream,
Part of which comes true, and part
Beats and trembles in the heart?

FRAGMENT: SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Is not to-day enough? Why do I peer
  Into the darkness of the day to come?
Is not to-morrow even as yesterday?
  And will the day that follows change thy doom?
Few flowers grow upon thy wintry way;
  And who waits for thee in that cheerless home
Whence thou hast fled, whither thou must return
Charged with the load that makes thee faint and mourn?

FRAGMENT: 'YE GENTLE VISITATIONS OF CALM THOUGHT'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

Ye gentle visitations of calm thought—
  Moods like the memories of happier earth,
  Which come arrayed in thoughts of little worth,
Like stars in clouds by the weak winds enwrought,—
  But that the clouds depart and stars remain,
While they remain, and ye, alas, depart!

FRAGMENT: MUSIC AND SWEET POETRY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

How sweet it is to sit and read the tales
  Of mighty poets and to hear the while
Sweet music, which when the attention fails
  Fills the dim pause——

FRAGMENT: THE SEPULCHRE OF MEMORY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

And where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee
Has been my heart—and thy dead memory
Has lain from childhood, many a changeful year,
Unchangingly preserved and buried there.

FRAGMENT: 'WHEN A LOVER CLASPS HIS FAIREST'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I

When a lover clasps his fairest,
Then be our dread sport the rarest.
Their caresses were like the chaff
In the tempest, and be our laugh
His despair—her epitaph!

II

When a mother clasps her child,
Watch till dusty Death has piled
His cold ashes on the clay;
She has loved it many a day—
She remains,—it fades away.

FRAGMENT: 'WAKE THE SERPENT NOT'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

Wake the serpent not—lest he
Should not know the way to go,—
Let him crawl which yet lies sleeping
Through the deep grass of the meadow!
Not a bee shall hear him creeping,
Not a may-fly shall awaken
From its cradling blue-bell shaken,
Not the starlight as he 's sliding
Through the grass with silent gliding.

FRAGMENT: RAIN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

The fitful alternations of the rain,
When the chill wind, languid as with pain
Of its own heavy moisture, here and there
Drives through the gray and beamless atmosphere.

FRAGMENT: A TALE UNTOLD

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

One sung of thee who left the tale untold,
  Like the false dawns which perish in the bursting;
Like empty cups of wrought and daedal gold,
  Which mock the lips with air, when they are thirsting.

FRAGMENT: TO ITALY

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

As the sunrise to the night,
  As the north wind to the clouds,
As the earthquake's fiery flight,
  Ruining mountain solitudes,
Everlasting Italy,
Be those hopes and fears on thee.

FRAGMENT: WINE OF THE FAIRIES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I am drunk with the honey wine
Of the moon-unfolded eglantine,
Which fairies catch in hyacinth bowls.
The bats, the dormice, and the moles
Sleep in the walls or under the sward
Of the desolate castle yard;
And when 'tis spilt on the summer earth
  Or its fumes arise among the dew,
Their jocund dreams are full of mirth,
  They gibber their joy in sleep; for few
  Of the fairies bear those bowls so new!

FRAGMENT: A ROMAN'S CHAMBER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I

In the cave which wild weeds cover
Wait for thine aethereal lover;
For the pallid moon is waning,
  O'er the spiral cypress hanging
And the moon no cloud is staining.

II

It was once a Roman's chamber,
  Where he kept his darkest revels,
And the wild weeds twine and clamber;
  It was then a chasm for devils.

FRAGMENT: ROME AND NATURE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

Rome has fallen, ye see it lying
  Heaped in undistinguished ruin:
Nature is alone undying.

VARIATION OF THE SONG OF THE MOON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

(*Prometheus Unbound*, Act iv.)

As a violet's gentle eye
  Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds;
  As a gray and empty mist
  Lies like solid amethyst
Over the western mountain it enfolds,

When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow;
As a strain of sweetest sound
Wraps itself the wind around
Until the voiceless wind be music too;
As aught dark, vain, and dull,
Basking in what is beautiful,
Is full of light and love—

CANCELLED STANZA OF THE MASK OF ANARCHY

[Published by H. Buxton Forman, *The Mask of Anarchy* (*Facsimile of Shelley's MS.*), 1887.]

(FOR WHICH STANZAS LXVIII, LXIX HAVE BEEN SUBSTITUTED.)

From the cities where from caves,
Like the dead from putrid graves,
Troops of starvelings gliding come,
Living Tenants of a tomb.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

Shelley loved the People; and respected them as often more virtuous, as always more suffering, and therefore more deserving of sympathy, than the great. He believed that a clash between the two classes of society was inevitable, and he eagerly ranged himself on the people's side. He had an idea of publishing a series of poems adapted expressly to commemorate their circumstances and wrongs. He wrote a few; but, in those days of prosecution for libel, they could not be printed. They are not among the best of his productions, a writer being always shackled when he endeavours to write down to the comprehension of those who could not understand or feel a highly imaginative style; but they show his earnestness, and with what heartfelt compassion he went home to the direct point of injury—that oppression is detestable as being the parent of starvation, nakedness, and ignorance. Besides these outpourings of compassion and indignation, he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph: such is the scope of the *Ode to the Assertors of Liberty*. He sketched also a new version of our national anthem, as addressed to Liberty.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1820

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

[Composed at Pisa, early in 1820 (dated, 'March, 1820,' in Harvard MS.), and published, with *Prometheus Unbound*, the same year: included in the Harvard College MS. book. Reprinted in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, both edd.]

Part First

A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;

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6 Like the Spirit of Love felt *1820*; And the Spirit of Love felt *1839, 1st ed.*; And the Spirit of Love fell *1839, 2nd ed.*

And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,

49 and of moss] and moss *Harvard MS.*

Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too,
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefilèd Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumèd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

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82 The] And the *Harvard MS.*

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from Heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant);--

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Upgathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of Night.

Part Second

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when Night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,

15 morn *Harvard MS., 1839*; moon *1820*.

That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her aëry footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier-bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest Spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of Summertide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died!

PART THIRD

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

23 and going *1820*; and the going *Harvard MS.*, *1839*. 59 All *1820*, *1839*; Through all *Harvard MS.*

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf by leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

19 lovely *Harvard MS.*, *1839*; lively *1820*. 23 of the morning *1820*, *1839*; of morning *Harvard MS.* 26 snow *Harvard MS.*, *1839*; now *1820*. 28 And lilies were drooping, white and wan *Harvard MS.* 32 Leaf by leaf, day after day *Harvard MS.*; Leaf after leaf, day after day *1820*; Leaf after leaf, day by day *1839*.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill;
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

63 mist] mists *Harvard MS.*

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want:
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When Winter had gone and Spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

Conclusion

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat,
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

96 and sudden flight] and their sudden flight the *Harvard MS.* 98 And under] Under *Harvard MS.* 114 Whether] And if *Harvard MS.* 118 Whether] Or if *Harvard MS.*

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never passed away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure

CANCELLED PASSAGE

[This stanza followed III. 62–65 in the *editio princeps*, 1820, but was omitted by Mrs. Shelley from all editions from 1839 onwards. It is cancelled in the Harvard MS.]

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by.

A VISION OF THE SEA

[Composed at Pisa early in 1820, and published with *Prometheus Unbound* in the same year. A transcript in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting is included in the Harvard MS. book, where it is dated 'April, 1820.']

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin
And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in,
Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders, made silent around,
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
With splendour and terror the black ship environ,
Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire

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6 ruining *Harvard MS., 1839*; raining *1820*. 8 sunk *Harvard MS., 1839*; sank *1820*.

The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has passed.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven
Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven.
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up by the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose,
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank:—
Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep,
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks and the dogfish their grave-clothes unbound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rained down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee;
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,

35 by *Harvard MS.*; from *1820, 1839.* 61 has *1820*; had *1839.*

It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye,
While its mother's is lustreless. 'Smile not, my child,
But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
To be after life what we have been before?
Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,
Those lips, and that hair,—all the smiling disguise
Thou yet wearest, sweet Spirit, which I, day by day,
Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?'—Lo! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,
Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:
The hurricane came from the west, and passed on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
Between Ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, passed.
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has passed,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where
The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,

87 all the *Harvard MS.*; all that *1820, 1839.* 116 through *Harvard MS.*; from *1820, 1839.*

And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lulled by the motion and murmurings
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure smile.
The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-wingèd tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,—
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,—
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst——

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122 cloud *Harvard MS., 1839*; clouds *1820.* 160 impetuously *1820, 1839*; convulsively *Harvard MS.*

THE CLOUD

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.]

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine aëry nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,

3 shade *1820*; shades *1839*. 6 buds *1839*; birds *1820*.

Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK

[Composed at Leghorn, 1820, and published with *Prometheus Unbound* in the same year. There is a transcript in the Harvard MS.]

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

59 with a *1820*; with the *1839*.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aëreal hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view!

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Wāking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

---

55 those *Harvard MS.*; these *1820*, *1839*.

We look before and after,
  And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
  With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
  Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
  Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
  Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
  That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
  That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
  From my lips would flow
The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

ODE TO LIBERTY

[Composed early in 1820, and published, with *Prometheus Unbound*, in the same year. A transcript in Shelley's hand of lines 1–21 is included in the Harvard MS. book, and amongst the Boscombe MSS. there is a fragment of a rough draft (Garnett). For further particulars concerning the text see Editor's Notes.]

> Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
> Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.—BYRON.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
  The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
  Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
      And in the rapid plumes of song
      Clothed itself, sublime and strong,
(As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,)
  Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
    Till from its station in the Heaven of fame
  The Spirit's whirlwind rapped it, and the ray
    Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
  As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
  A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

II

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
  The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal earth,
  That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
      But this divinest universe
      Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but, power from worst producing worse,
  The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
    And of the birds, and of the watery forms,

---

4 into] unto *Harvard MS.*

And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
Were, as to mountain-wolves their raggèd caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide
Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring Heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Aegean main

V

Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,—
A divine work! Athens, diviner yet,
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;

For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past:
(Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:)
A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmaean Maenad[1],
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd;
And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,
The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sighed
Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks

113 lore *1839*; love *1820*. 116 shattered] scattered *cj. Rossetti.*

[1] See the *Bacchae* of Euripides.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX

A thousand years the Earth cried, 'Where art thou?'
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
With divine wand traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome.

X

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever
In the calm regions of the orient day!
Luther caught thy wakening glance;
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow forever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

XI

The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, 'Liberty!' Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
When like Heaven's Sun girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation

---

134 wand *1820*; want *1839*.

Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII

Thou Heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then
In ominous eclipse? a thousand years
Bred from the slime of deep Oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
How like Bacchanals of blood
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

XIII

England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Aetna, and the cold
Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder:
O'er the lit waves every Aeolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
They cry, 'Be dim; ye lamps of Heaven suspended o'er us!'
Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us
In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.

XIV

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.
Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!
Thou island of eternity! thou shrine

---

194 us] as *cj. Forman.*

Where Desolation, clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV

Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name
Of King into the dust! or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
Ye the oracle have heard:
Lift the victory-flashing sword,
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI

Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of Priest might shrink and dwindle
Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
Each before the judgement-throne
Of its own aweless soul, or of the Power unknown!
Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,
Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue
And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due!

XVII

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave
Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour!
If on his own high will, a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?
Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,

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212 King *Boscombe MS.*; * * * * *1820*, *1839*; Christ *cj. Swinburne.* 249 Or *1839*; O, *1820.* 250 Driving *1820*; Diving *1839.*

Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: 'Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth'? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan,
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one!

XVIII

Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
O Liberty! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee:
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears?—The solemn harmony

XIX

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aëreal golden light
On the heavy-sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain;
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day,—
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

CANCELLED PASSAGE OF THE ODE TO LIBERTY

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Within a cavern of man's trackless spirit
Is throned an Image, so intensely fair
That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it
Worship, and as they kneel, tremble and wear
The splendour of its presence, and the light
Penetrates their dreamlike frame
Till they become charged with the strength of flame.

TO ——

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden,
  Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
  Ever to burthen thine.

II

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
  Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
  With which I worship thine.

ARETHUSA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated by her 'Pisa, 1820.' There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 24.]

I

  Arethusa arose
  From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
  From cloud and from crag,
  With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
  She leapt down the rocks,
  With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;—
  Her steps paved with green
  The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams;
  And gliding and springing
  She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
  The Earth seemed to love her,
  And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

II

  Then Alpheus bold,
  On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook;
  And opened a chasm
  In the rocks—with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
  And the black south wind
  It unsealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,
  And earthquake and thunder
  Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below.
  And the beard and the hair
  Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
  As he followed the light
  Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

III

  'Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
  And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!'
  The loud Ocean heard,
  To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
  And under the water
  The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam;
  Behind her descended
  Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:—
  Like a gloomy stain
  On the emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind,—
  As an eagle pursuing
  A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

26 unsealed *B.*; concealed *1824*.

31 And the *B.*; The *1824*.

IV

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearlèd thrones;
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:—
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the Ocean's foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain clifts
They passed to their Dorian home.

V

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill;
At noontide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore;—
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky
When they love but live no more.

SONG OF PROSERPINE

WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 24.]

I

Sacred Goddess, Mother Earth,
Thou from whose immortal bosom
Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,
Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

II

If with mists of evening dew
Thou dost nourish these young flowers
Till they grow, in scent and hue,
Fairest children of the Hours,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

HYMN OF APOLLO

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 25.]

I

The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—

---

69 Ocean's *B.*; ocean *1824*.

Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

II

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
  I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
  My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

III

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
  Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
  Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of Night.

IV

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers
  With their aethereal colours; the moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
  Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

V

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,
  Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;
  For grief that I depart they weep and frown:
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

VI

I am the eye with which the Universe
  Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
  All prophecy, all medicine is mine,
All light of art or nature;—to my song
Victory and praise in its own right belong.

HYMN OF PAN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 25.]

I

From the forests and highlands
  We come, we come;
From the river-girt islands,
  Where loud waves are dumb
    Listening to my sweet pipings.
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
  The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes,
  The cicale above in the lime,

---

32 itself divine] it is divine *B.* 34 is *B.*; are *1824.* 36 its *cj. Rossetti, 1870*, *B.*; their *1824.* *Hymn of Pan.*—5, 12 Listening to] Listening *B.*

And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
Listening to my sweet pipings.

II

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day,
Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
And the Nymphs of the woods and the waves,
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
And the brink of the dewy caves,
And all that did then attend and follow,
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
With envy of my sweet pipings.

III

I sang of the dancing stars.
I sang of the daedal Earth,
And of Heaven—and the giant wars,
And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
And then I changed my pipings,—
Singing how down the vale of Maenalus
I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed.
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!
It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed:
All wept, as I think both ye now would,
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

THE QUESTION

[Published by Leigh Hunt (with the signature Σ) in *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1822. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Copies exist in the Harvard MS. book, amongst the Boscombe MSS., and amongst the Ollier MSS.]

I

I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

II

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxslips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets—
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

III

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may,

The Question—14 Like . . . mirth *Harvard MS.*, *Boscombe MS.*; *wanting in Ollier MS.*, *1822*, *1824*, *1839*. 15 Heaven's collected *Harvard MS.*, *Ollier MS.*, *1822*; Heaven-collected *1824*, *1839*.

And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
  Was the bright dew, yet drained not by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
  With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

IV

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
  There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with white,
And starry river buds among the sedge,
  And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
  With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

V

Methought that of these visionary flowers
  I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
  Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
  Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom?

THE TWO SPIRITS: AN ALLEGORY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

First Spirit.

O THOU, who plumed with strong desire
  Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
      Night is coming!
  Bright are the regions of the air,
And among the winds and beams
  It were delight to wander there—
      Night is coming!

Second Spirit.

The deathless stars are bright above;
  If I would cross the shade of night,
Within my heart is the lamp of love,
      And that is day!
  And the moon will smile with gentle light
On my golden plumes where'er they move;
  The meteors will linger round my flight,
      And make night day.

First Spirit.

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
  Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain;

2 Wouldst *1839*; Would *1824*.

See, the bounds of the air are shaken—
Night is coming!
The red swift clouds of the hurricane
Yon declining sun have overtaken,
The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—
Night is coming!

Second Spirit.

I see the light, and I hear the sound;
I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark,
With the calm within and the light around
Which makes night day:
And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,
Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,
My moon-like flight thou then mayst mark
On high, far away.

Some say there is a precipice
Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
Mid Alpine mountains;
And that the languid storm pursuing
That wingèd shape, for ever flies
Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
Its aëry fountains.

Some say when nights are dry and clear,
And the death-dews sleep on the morass,
Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller,
Which make night day:
And a silver shape like his early love doth pass
Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,
And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,
He finds night day.

ODE TO NAPLES[1]

[Composed at San Juliano di Pisa, August 17–25, 1820; published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a copy, 'for the most part neat and legible,' amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 14–18.]

EPODE I *a*

I STOOD within the City disinterred[2];
And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls
Of spirits passing through the streets; and heard

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31 moon-like *1824*; moonlight *1839*. 44 make] makes *1824*, *1839*.

[1] The Author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baiae with the enthusiasm excited by the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes which depicture these scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] Pompeii.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

The Mountain's slumberous voice at intervals
Thrill through those roofless halls;
The oracular thunder penetrating shook
The listening soul in my suspended blood;
I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke—
I felt, but heard not:—through white columns glowed
The isle-sustaining ocean-flood,
A plane of light between two heavens of azure!
Around me gleamed many a bright sepulchre
Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure
Were to spare Death, had never made erasure;
But every living lineament was clear
As in the sculptor's thought; and there
The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy, and pine,
Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow,
Seemed only not to move and grow
Because the crystal silence of the air
Weighed on their life; even as the Power divine
Which then lulled all things, brooded upon mine.

EPODE II *a*

Then gentle winds arose
With many a mingled close
Of wild Aeolian sound, and mountain-odours keen;
And where the Baian ocean
Welters with airlike motion,
Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,
Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves,
Even as the ever stormless atmosphere
Floats o'er the Elysian realm,
It bore me, like an Angel, o'er the waves
Of sunlight, whose swift pinnace of dewy air
No storm can overwhelm.
I sailed, where ever flows
Under the calm Serene
A spirit of deep emotion
From the unknown graves
Of the dead Kings of Melody[1].
Shadowy Aornos darkened o'er the helm
The horizontal aether; Heaven stripped bare
Its depth over Elysium, where the prow
Made the invisible water white as snow;
From that Typhaean mount, Inarime,
There streamed a sunbright vapour, like the standard
Of some aethereal host;
Whilst from all the coast,
Louder and louder, gathering round, there wandered
Over the oracular woods and divine sea

25 odours *B.*; odour *1824.* 42 depth *B.*; depths *1824.* 45 sunbright *B.*; sunlit *1824.*

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[1] Homer and Virgil.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Prophesyings which grew articulate—
They seize me—I must speak them!—be they fate!

STROPHE I

Naples! thou Heart of men which ever pantest
Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven!
Elysian City, which to calm enchantest
The mutinous air and sea! they round thee, even
As sleep round Love, are driven!
Metropolis of a ruined Paradise
Long lost, late won, and yet but half regained!
Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,
Which armèd Victory offers up unstained
To Love, the flower-ènchained!
Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,
Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,
If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,—
Hail, hail, all hail!

STROPHE II

Thou youngest giant birth
Which from the groaning earth
Leap'st, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale!
Last of the Intercessors!
Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors
Pleadest before God's love! Arrayed in Wisdom's mail,
Wave thy lightning lance in mirth
Nor let thy high heart fail,
Though from their hundred gates the leagued Oppressors
With hurried legions move!
Hail, hail, all hail!

ANTISTROPHE I *a*

What though Cimmerian Anarchs dare blaspheme
Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a mirror
To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam
To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer;
A new Actaeon's error
Shall theirs have been—devoured by their own hounds!
Be thou like the imperial Basilisk
Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!
Gaze on Oppression, till at that dread risk
Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk:
Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier grow,
And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe:—
If Hope, and Truth, and Justice may avail,
Thou shalt be great—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE II *a*

From Freedom's form divine,
From Nature's inmost shrine,
Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil;

O'er Ruin desolate,
O'er Falsehood's fallen state,
Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer pale!
And equal laws be thine,
And wingèd words let sail,
Freighted with truth even from the throne of God:
That wealth, surviving fate,
Be thine.—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE I β

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling paean
From land to land re-echoed solemnly,
Till silence became music? From the Aeaean[1]
To the cold Alps, eternal Italy
Starts to hear thine! The Sea
Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs
In light and music; widowed Genoa wan
By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,
Murmuring, 'Where is Doria?' fair Milan,
Within whose veins long ran
The viper's[2] palsying venom, lifts her heel
To bruise his head. The signal and the seal
(If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)
Art thou of all these hopes.—O hail!

ANTISTROPHE II β

Florence! beneath the sun,
Of cities fairest one,
Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation:
From eyes of quenchless hope
Rome tears the priestly cope,
As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,—
An athlete stripped to run
From a remoter station
For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore:—
As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail,
So now may Fraud and Wrong! O hail!

EPODE I β

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms
Arrayed against the ever-living Gods?
The crash and darkness of a thousand storms
Bursting their inaccessible abodes
Of crags and thunder-clouds?
See ye the banners blazoned to the day,
Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride?
Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,
The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide
With iron light is dyed;

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[1] Aeaea, the island of Circe.—[Shelley's Note.]

[2] The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrants of Milan.—[Shelley's Note.]

The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions
Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating;
An hundred tribes nourished on strange religions
And lawless slaveries,—down the aëreal regions
Of the white Alps, desolating,
Famished wolves that bide no waiting,
Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,
Trampling our columned cities into dust,
Their dull and savage lust
On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating—
They come! The fields they tread look black and hoary
With fire—from their red feet the streams run gory!

EPODE II β

Great Spirit, deepest Love!
Which rulest and dost move
All things which live and are, within the Italian shore;
Who spreadest Heaven around it,
Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;
Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor;
Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command
The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison
From the Earth's bosom chill;
Oh, bid those beams be each a blinding brand
Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of poison!
Bid the Earth's plenty kill!
Bid thy bright Heaven above,
Whilst light and darkness bound it,
Be their tomb who planned
To make it ours and thine!
Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill
And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon
Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire—
Be man's high hope and unextinct desire
The instrument to work thy will divine!
Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from leopards,
And frowns and fears from thee,
Would not more swiftly flee
Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.—
Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine
Thou yieldest or withholdest, oh, let be
This city of thy worship ever free!

AUTUMN: A DIRGE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,

143 old *1824*; lost *B.*   147 black *1824*; blue *B.*

And the Year
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying.
Come, Months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold Year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

II

The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
For the Year;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
To his dwelling;
Come, Months, come away;
Put on white, black, and gray;
Let your light sisters play—
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold Year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

THE WANING MOON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

And like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky East,
A white and shapeless mass—

TO THE MOON

[Published (I) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, (II) by W. M. Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*, 1870.]

I

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,—
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

II

Thou chosen sister of the Spirit,
That gazes on thee till in thee it pities . . .

DEATH

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

Death is here and death is there,
Death is busy everywhere,
All around, within, beneath,
Above is death—and we are death.

II

Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel,
On all we know and all we fear,

. . . .

III

First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and
when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too.

IV

All things that we love and cherish
Like ourselves must fade and perish
Such is our rude mortal lot—
Love itself would, did they not.

LIBERTY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

The fiery mountains answer each other;
Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone;
The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
And the ice-rocks are shaken round Winter's throne,
When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown.

II

From a single cloud the lightening flashes,
Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around,
Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
An hundred are shuddering and tottering; the sound
Is bellowing underground.

III

But keener thy gaze than the lightening's glare,
And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp;
Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean; thy stare
Makes blind the volcanoes; the sun's bright lamp
To thine is a fen-fire damp.

IV

From billow and mountain and exhalation
The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast;
From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,—
And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
In the van of the morning light.

SUMMER AND WINTER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *The Keepsake*, 1829. Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting.]

It was a bright and cheerful afternoon,
Towards the end of the sunny month of June,

Liberty—4 zone *edd. 1824, 1839*; throne *later edd.*

When the north wind congregates in crowds
The floating mountains of the silver clouds
From the horizon—and the stainless sky
Opens beyond them like eternity.
All things rejoiced beneath the sun; the weeds,
The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds;
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees.

It was a winter such as when birds die
In the deep forests; and the fishes lie
Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
A wrinkled clod as hard as brick; and when,
Among their children, comfortable men
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold:
Alas, then, for the homeless beggar old!

THE TOWER OF FAMINE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *The Keepsake*, 1829. Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting.]

Amid the desolation of a city,
Which was the cradle, and is now the grave
Of an extinguished people,—so that Pity

Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of Oblivion's wave,
There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built
Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave

For bread, and gold, and blood: Pain, linked to Guilt,
Agitates the light flame of their hours,
Until its vital oil is spent or spilt.

There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers
And sacred domes; each marble-ribbèd roof,
The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers

Of solitary wealth,—the tempest-proof
Pavilions of the dark Italian air,—
Are by its presence dimmed—they stand aloof,

And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare;
As if a spectre wrapped in shapeless terror
Amid a company of ladies fair

Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,
The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
Should be absorbed, till they to marble grew.

Summer and Winter.—11 birds die *1839*; birds do die *1829*. *The Tower of Famine.*—7 For] With *1829*.

AN ALLEGORY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

A PORTAL as of shadowy adamant
  Stands yawning on the highway of the life
Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt;
  Around it rages an unceasing strife
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt
The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high
Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

II

And many pass it by with careless tread,
  Not knowing that a shadowy . . .
Tracks every traveller even to where the dead
  Wait peacefully for their companion new;
But others, by more curious humour led,
  Pause to examine;—these are very few,
And they learn little there, except to know
That shadows follow them where'er they go.

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

TELL me, thou Star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
    Will thy pinions close now?

II

Tell me, Moon, thou pale and gray
Pilgrim of Heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
    Seekest thou repose now?

III

Weary Wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
    On the tree or billow?

SONNET

[Published by Leigh Hunt, *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823. There is a transcript amongst the Ollier MSS., and another in the Harvard MS. book.]

YE hasten to the grave! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear?
O thou quick heart, which pantest to possess

An Allegory.—8 pass *Rossetti*; passed *edd. 1824, 1839.* *Sonnet.*—1 grave *Ollier MS.*; dead *Harvard MS., 1823, edd. 1824, 1839.*

All that pale Expectation feigneth fair!
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess
Whence thou didst come, and whither thou must go,
And all that never yet was known would know—
Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press,
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,
A refuge in the cavern of gray death?
O heart, and mind, and thoughts! what thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below?

LINES TO A REVIEWER

[Published by Leigh Hunt, *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823. These lines, and the *Sonnet* immediately preceding, are signed Σ in the *Literary Pocket-Book.*]

Alas, good friend, what profit can you see
In hating such a hateless thing as me?
There is no sport in hate where all the rage
Is on one side: in vain would you assuage
Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
In which not even contempt lurks to beguile
Your heart, by some faint sympathy of hate.
Oh, conquer what you cannot satiate!
For to your passion I am far more coy
Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy
In winter noon. Of your antipathy
If I am the Narcissus, you are free
To pine into a sound with hating me.

FRAGMENT OF A SATIRE ON SATIRE

[Published by Edward Dowden. *Correspondence of Robert Southey and Caroline Bowles*, 1880.]

If gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains,
And racks of subtle torture, if the pains
Of shame, of fiery Hell's tempestuous wave,
Seen through the caverns of the shadowy grave,
Hurling the damned into the murky air
While the meek blest sit smiling; if Despair
And Hate, the rapid bloodhounds with which Terror
Hunts through the world the homeless steps of Error,
Are the true secrets of the commonweal
To make men wise and just; . . .
And not the sophisms of revenge and fear,
Bloodier than is revenge . . .
Then send the priests to every hearth and home
To preach the burning wrath which is to come,

Sonnet.—5 pale Expectation *Ollier MS.*; anticipation *Harvard MS., 1823, edd. 1824, 1839.* 7 must *Harvard MS., 1823*; mayst *1824*; mayest *edd. 1839.* 8 all that *Harvard MS., 1823*; that which *edd. 1824, 1839.* would *Harvard MS., 1823*; wouldst *edd. 1839.* *Lines to a Reviewer.*—3 where *edd. 1824, 1839*; when *1823.*

In words like flakes of sulphur, such as thaw
The frozen tears . . .
If Satire's scourge could wake the slumbering hounds
Of Conscience, or erase the deeper wounds,
The leprous scars of callous Infamy;
If it could make the present not to be,
Or charm the dark past never to have been,
Or turn regret to hope; who that has seen
What Southey is and was, would not exclaim,
'Lash on!'   be the keen verse dipped in flame;
Follow his flight with wingèd words, and urge
The strokes of the inexorable scourge
Until the heart be naked, till his soul
See the contagion's spots   foul;
And from the mirror of Truth's sunlike shield,
From which his Parthian arrow . . .
Flash on his sight the spectres of the past,
Until his mind's eye paint thereon—
Let scorn like   yawn below,
And rain on him like flakes of fiery snow.
This cannot be, it ought not, evil still—
Suffering makes suffering, ill must follow ill.
Rough words beget sad thoughts,   and, beside,
Men take a sullen and a stupid pride
In being all they hate in others' shame,
By a perverse antipathy of fame.
'Tis not worth while to prove, as I could, how
From the sweet fountains of our Nature flow
These bitter waters; I will only say,
If any friend would take Southey some day,
And tell him, in a country walk alone,
Softening harsh words with friendship's gentle tone,
How incorrect his public conduct is,
And what men think of it, 'twere not amiss.
Far better than to make innocent ink—

GOOD-NIGHT

[Published by Leigh Hunt over the signature Σ, *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1822. It is included in the Harvard MS. book, and there is a transcript by Shelley in a copy of *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1819, presented by him to Miss Sophia Stacey, Dec. 29, 1820. (See *Love's Philosophy* and *Time Long Past*.) Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1822, with which the Harvard MS. and *P. P.*, 1824, agree. The variants of the Stacey MS., 1820, are given in the footnotes.]

I

Good-night? ah! no; the hour is ill
  Which severs those it should unite;
Let us remain together still,
  Then it will be *good* night.

1 Good-night? no, love! the night is ill *Stacey MS.*

II

How can I call the lone night good,
  Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?
Be it not said, thought, understood—
  Then it will be—*good* night.

III

To hearts which near each other move
  From evening close to morning light,
The night is good; because, my love,
  They never *say* good-night.

BUONA NOTTE

[Published by Medwin, *The Angler in Wales, or Days and Nights of Sportsmen*, 1834. The text is revised by Rossetti from the Boscombe MS.]

I

'Buona notte, buona notte!'—Come mai
  La notte sarà buona senza te?
Non dirmi buona notte,—chè tu sai,
  La notte sà star buona da per sè.

II

Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme,
  La notte quando Lilla m'abbandona;
Pei cuori chi si batton insieme
  Ogni notte, senza dirla, sarà buona.

III

Come male buona notte si suona
  Con sospiri e parole interrotte!—
Il modo di aver la notte buona
  E mai non di dir la buona notte.

ORPHEUS

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; revised and enlarged by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

A. Not far from hence. From yonder pointed hill,
Crowned with a ring of oaks, you may behold
A dark and barren field, through which there flows,
Sluggish and black, a deep but narrow stream,
Which the wind ripples not, and the fair moon
Gazes in vain, and finds no mirror there.
Follow the herbless banks of that strange brook
Until you pause beside a darksome pond,
The fountain of this rivulet, whose gush
Cannot be seen, hid by a rayless night

Good-night—5 How were the night without thee good *Stacey MS.* 9 The hearts that on each other beat *Stacey MS.* 11 Have nights as good as they are sweet *Stacey MS.* 12 But never *say* good night *Stacey MS.*
Buona Notte—2 sarà] sia *1834.* 4 buona] bene *1834.* 9 Come] Quanto *1834.*

That lives beneath the overhanging rock
That shades the pool—an endless spring of gloom,
Upon whose edge hovers the tender light,
Trembling to mingle with its paramour,—
But, as Syrinx fled Pan, so night flies day,
Or, with most sullen and regardless hate,
Refuses stern her heaven-born embrace.
On one side of this jagged and shapeless hill
There is a cave, from which there eddies up
A pale mist, like aëreal gossamer,
Whose breath destroys all life—awhile it veils
The rock—then, scattered by the wind, it flies
Along the stream, or lingers on the clefts,
Killing the sleepy worms. if aught bide there.
Upon the beetling edge of that dark rock
There stands a group of cypresses; not such
As, with a graceful spire and stirring life,
Pierce the pure heaven of your native vale,
Whose branches the air plays among, but not
Disturbs, fearing to spoil their solemn grace;
But blasted and all wearily they stand,
One to another clinging; their weak boughs
Sigh as the wind buffets them, and they shake
Beneath its blasts—a weatherbeaten crew!
Chorus. What wondrous sound is that, mournful and faint,
But more melodious than the murmuring wind
Which through the columns of a temple glides?
A. It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre,
Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king
Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes;
But in their speed they bear along with them
The waning sound, scattering it like dew
Upon the startled sense.
Chorus. Does he still sing?
Methought he rashly cast away his harp
When he had lost Eurydice.
A. Ah, no!
Awhile he paused. As a poor hunted stag
A moment shudders on the fearful brink
Of a swift stream—the cruel hounds press on
With deafening yell, the arrows glance and wound,—
He plunges in: so Orpheus, seized and torn
By the sharp fangs of an insatiate grief,
Maenad-like waved his lyre in the bright air,
And wildly shrieked 'Where she is, it is dark!'
And then he struck from forth the strings a sound
Of deep and fearful melody. Alas!
In times long past, when fair Eurydice
With her bright eyes sat listening by his side,
He gently sang of high and heavenly themes.

16, 17, 24 *1870 only.* 45-55 Ah, no! . . . melody *1870 only.*

As in a brook, fretted with little waves
By the light airs of spring—each riplet makes
A many-sided mirror for the sun,
While it flows musically through green banks,
Ceaseless and pauseless, ever clear and fresh,
So flowed his song, reflecting the deep joy
And tender love that fed those sweetest notes,
The heavenly offspring of ambrosial food.
But that is past. Returning from drear Hell,
He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone,
Blackened with lichens, on a herbless plain.
Then from the deep and overflowing spring
Of his eternal ever-moving grief
There rose to Heaven a sound of angry song.
'Tis as a mighty cataract that parts
Two sister rocks with waters swift and strong,
And casts itself with horrid roar and din
Adown a steep; from a perennial source
It ever flows and falls, and breaks the air
With loud and fierce, but most harmonious roar,
And as it falls casts up a vaporous spray
Which the sun clothes in hues of Iris light.
Thus the tempestuous torrent of his grief
Is clothed in sweetest sounds and varying words
Of poesy. Unlike all human works,
It never slackens, and through every change
Wisdom and beauty and the power divine
Of mighty poesy together dwell,
Mingling in sweet accord. As I have seen
A fierce south blast tear through the darkened sky,
Driving along a rack of wingèd clouds,
Which may not pause, but ever hurry on,
As their wild shepherd wills them, while the stars,
Twinkling and dim, peep from between the plumes.
Anon the sky is cleared, and the high dome
Of serene Heaven, starred with fiery flowers,
Shuts in the shaken earth; or the still moon
Swiftly, yet gracefully, begins her walk,
Rising all bright behind the eastern hills.
I talk of moon, and wind, and stars, and not
Of song; but, would I echo his high song,
Nature must lend me words ne'er used before,
Or I must borrow from her perfect works,
To picture forth his perfect attributes.
He does no longer sit upon his throne
Of rock upon a desert herbless plain,
For the evergreen and knotted ilexes,
And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs,
And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit,
And elms dragging along the twisted vines,

66 *1870 only.*

Which drop their berries as they follow fast,
And blackthorn bushes with their infant race
Of blushing rose-blooms; beeches, to lovers dear,
And weeping willow trees; all swift or slow,
As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit,
Have circled in his throne, and Earth herself
Has sent from her maternal breast a growth
Of starlike flowers and herbs of odour sweet,
To pave the temple that his poesy
Has framed, while near his feet grim lions couch,
And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair.
Even the blind worms seem to feel the sound.
The birds are silent, hanging down their heads,
Perched on the lowest branches of the trees;
Not even the nightingale intrudes a note
In rivalry, but all entranced she listens.

FIORDISPINA

[Published in part (ll. 11-30) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; in full (from the Boscombe MS.) by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

The season was the childhood of sweet June,
Whose sunny hours from morning until noon
Went creeping through the day with silent feet,
Each with its load of pleasure; slow yet sweet;
Like the long years of blest Eternity
Never to be developed. Joy to thee,
Fiordispina and thy Cosimo,
For thou the wonders of the depth canst know
Of this unfathomable flood of hours,
Sparkling beneath the heaven which embowers—

. . . .

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins
Nature had rased their love—which could not be
But by dissevering their nativity.
And so they grew together like two flowers
Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
Lull or awaken in their purple prime,
Which the same hand will gather—the same clime
Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see
All those who love—and who e'er loved like thee,
Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,
Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow
The ardours of a vision which obscure
The very idol of its portraiture.
He faints, dissolved into a sea of love;

---

112 trees *1870*; too *1862*. 113 huge *1870*; long *1862*. 116 starlike *1870*; starry *1862*. odour *1862*; odours *1870*. *Fiordispina*—11 to *1824*; two *edd. 1839*. 20 e'er *1862*; ever *edd. 1824, 1839*. 25 sea *ed. 1862*; sense *edd. 1824, 1839*.

But thou art as a planet sphered above;
But thou art Love itself—ruling the motion
Of his subjected spirit: such emotion
Must end in sin and sorrow, if sweet May
Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding-day.

. . . .

'Lie there; sleep awhile in your own dew,
Ye faint-eyed children of the   Hours,'
Fiordispina said, and threw the flowers
Which she had from the breathing—

. . . .

A table near of polished porphyry.
They seemed to wear a beauty from the eye
That looked on them—a fragrance from the touch
Whose warmth   checked their life; a light such
As sleepers wear, lulled by the voice they love,
                which did reprove
The childish pity that she felt for them,
And a   remorse that from their stem
She had divided such fair shapes   made
A feeling in the   which was a shade
Of gentle beauty on the flowers: there lay
All gems that make the earth's dark bosom gay.
    rods of myrtle-buds and lemon-blooms,
And that leaf tinted lightly which assumes
The livery of unremembered snow—
Violets whose eyes have drunk—

. . . .

Fiordispina and her nurse are now
Upon the steps of the high portico;
Under the withered arm of Media
She flings her glowing arm

. . . .

    step by step and stair by stair,
That withered woman, gray and white and brown—
More like a trunk by lichens overgrown
Than anything which once could have been human.
And ever as she goes the palsied woman

. . . .

'How slow and painfully you seem to walk,
Poor Media! you tire yourself with talk.'
            'And well it may,
Fiordispina, dearest—well-a-day!
You are hastening to a marriage-bed;
I to the grave!'—'And if my love were dead,
Unless my heart deceives me, I would lie
Beside him in my shroud as willingly
As now in the gay night-dress Lilla wrought.'
'Fie, child! Let that unseasonable thought
Not be remembered till it snows in June;
Such fancies are a music out of tune

With the sweet dance your heart must keep to-night.
What! would you take all beauty and delight
Back to the Paradise from which you sprung,
And leave to grosser mortals?——
And say, sweet lamb, would you not learn the sweet
And subtle mystery by which spirits meet?
Who knows whether the loving game is played,
When, once of mortal [vesture] disarrayed,
The naked soul goes wandering here and there
Through the wide deserts of Elysian air?
The violet dies not till it'——

TIME LONG PAST

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. This is one three poems (cf. *Love's Philosophy* and *Good-Night*) transcribed by Shelley a copy of Leigh Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book* for 1819 presented by him Miss Sophia Stacey, December 29, 1820.]

I

Like the ghost of a dear friend dead
Is Time long past.
A tone which is now forever fled,
A hope which is now forever past,
A love so sweet it could not last,
Was Time long past.

II

There were sweet dreams in the night
Of Time long past:
And, was it sadness or delight,
Each day a shadow onward cast
Which made us wish it yet migh last—
That Time long past.

III

There is regret, almost remorse,
For Time long past.
'Tis like a child's belovèd corse
A father watches, till at last
Beauty is like remembrance, cast
From Time long past.

FRAGMENT: THE DESERTS OF DIM SLEEP

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

I went into the deserts of dim sleep—
That world which, like an unknown wilderness,
Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep—

FRAGMENT: 'THE VIEWLESS AND INVISIBLE CONSEQUENCE'

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

The viewless and invisible Consequence
Watches thy goings-out, and comings-in,
And . . . hovers o'er thy guilty sleep,
Unveiling every new-born deed, and thoughts
More ghastly than those deeds—

FRAGMENT: A SERPENT-FACE

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

His face was like a snake's—wrinkled and loose
And withered—

FRAGMENT: DEATH IN LIFE

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

My head is heavy, my limbs are weary,
And it is not life that makes me move.

FRAGMENT: 'SUCH HOPE, AS IS THE SICK DESPAIR OF GOOD'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Such hope, as is the sick despair of good,
Such fear, as is the certainty of ill,
Such doubt, as is pale Expectation's food
Turned while she tastes to poison, when the will
Is powerless, and the spirit . . .

FRAGMENT: 'ALAS! THIS IS NOT WHAT I THOUGHT LIFE WAS'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. This fragment is joined by Forman with that immediately preceding.]

Alas! this is not what I thought life was.
I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass
Untouched by suffering, through the rugged glen.
In mine own heart I saw as in a glass
The hearts of others . . . And when
I went among my kind, with triple brass
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,
To bear scorn, fear, and hate, a woful mass!

FRAGMENT: MILTON'S SPIRIT

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

I dreamed that Milton's spirit rose, and took
From life's green tree his Uranian lute;
And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook
All human things built in contempt of man,—
And sanguine thrones and impious altars quaked,
Prisons and citadels. . .

FRAGMENT: 'UNRISEN SPLENDOUR OF THE BRIGHTEST SUN'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Unrisen splendour of the brightest sun,
To rise upon our darkness, if the star
Now beckoning thee out of thy misty throne
Could thaw the clouds which wage an obscure war
With thy young brightness!

FRAGMENT: *PATER OMNIPOTENS*

[Edited from *MS. Shelley E* 4 in the Bodleian Library, and published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903. Here placed conjecturally amongst the compositions of 1820, but of uncertain date, and belonging possibly to 1819 or a still earlier year.]

Serene in his unconquerable might
Endued[,] the Almighty King, his steadfast throne
Encompassed unapproachably with power
And darkness and deep solitude and awe
Stood like a black cloud on some aëry cliff
Embosoming its lightning—in his sight
Unnumbered glorious spirits trembling stood
Like slaves before their Lord—prostrate around
Heaven's multitudes hymned everlasting praise.

FRAGMENT: TO THE MIND OF MAN

[Edited, published and here placed as the preceding.]

Thou living light that in thy rainbow hues
Clothest this naked world; and over Sea
And Earth and air, and all the shapes that be
In peopled darkness of this wondrous world
The Spirit of thy glory dost diffuse
truth   thou Vital Flame
Mysterious thought that in this mortal frame
Of things, with unextinguished lustre burnest
Now pale and faint now high to Heaven upcurled
That eer as thou dost languish still returnest
And ever

Before the   before the Pyramids

So soon as from the Earth formless and rude
One living step had chased drear Solitude
Thou wert, Thought; thy brightness charmed the lids
Of the vast snake Eternity, who kept
The tree of good and evil.—

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1820, BY MRS. SHELLEY

We spent the latter part of the year 1819 in Florence, where Shelley passed several hours daily in the Gallery, and made various notes on its ancient works of art. His thoughts were a good deal taken up also by the project of a steamboat, undertaken by a friend, an engineer, to ply between Leghorn and Marseilles, for which he supplied a sum of money. This was a sort of plan to delight Shelley, and he was greatly disappointed when it was thrown aside.

There was something in Florence that disagreed excessively with his health, and he suffered far more pain than usual; so much so that we left it sooner than we intended, and removed to Pisa, where we had some friends, and, above all, where we could consult the celebrated Vaccà as to the cause of Shelley's sufferings. He, like every other medical man, could only guess at that, and gave little hope of immediate relief; he enjoined him to abstain from all physicians and medicine, and to leave his complaint to Nature. As he had vainly consulted medical men of the highest repute in England, he was easily persuaded to adopt this advice. Pain and ill-health followed him to the end; but the residence at Pisa agreed with him better than any other, and there in consequence we remained.

In the Spring we spent a week or two near Leghorn, borrowing the house of some friends who were absent on a journey to England. It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems. He addressed the letter to Mrs. Gisborne from this house, which was hers: he had made his study of the workshop of her son, who was an engineer. Mrs. Gisborne had been a friend of my father in her younger days. She was a lady of great accomplishments, and charming from her frank and affectionate nature. She had the most intense love of knowledge, a delicate and trembling sensibility, and preserved freshness of mind after a life of considerable adversity. As a favourite friend of my father, we had sought her with eagerness; and the most open and cordial friendship was established between us.

Our stay at the Baths of San Giuliano was shortened by an accident. At the foot of our garden ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks, and, breaking its bounds, this canal also overflowed; all this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was that it was speedily flooded. The rising waters filled the Square of the Baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and, meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a picturesque sight at night to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below to the hills above the Baths. A fire was kept up to guide them across the ford; and the forms of the men and the animals showed in dark relief against the red glare of the flame, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the Square.

We then removed to Pisa, and took up our abode there for the winter. The extreme mildness of the climate suited Shelley, and his solitude was enlivened by an intercourse with several intimate friends. Chance cast us strangely enough on this quiet half-unpeopled town; but its very peace suited Shelley. Its river, the near mountains, and not distant sea, added to its attractions, and were the objects of many delightful excursions. We feared the south of Italy, and a hotter climate, on account of our child;

our former bereavement inspiring us with terror. We seemed to take root here, and moved little afterwards; often, indeed, entertaining projects for visiting other parts of Italy, but still delaying. But for our fears on account of our child, I believe we should have wandered over the world, both being passionately fond of travelling. But human life, besides its great unalterable necessities, is ruled by a thousand lilliputian ties that shackle at the time, although it is difficult to account afterwards for their influence over our destiny.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1821

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated January 1, 1821.]

I

Orphan Hours, the Year is dead,
 Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry Hours, smile instead,
 For the Year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

II

As an earthquake rocks a corse
 In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
 Rocks the death-cold Year to-day;
Solemn Hours! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

III

As the wild air stirs and sways
 The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
 Rocks the Year:—be calm and mild,
Trembling Hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

IV

January gray is here,
 Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier,
 March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O ye Hours!
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

TO NIGHT

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a transcript in the Harvard MS. Book.]

I

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long-sought!

To Night—1 o'er *Harvard MS.*; over *edd. 1824, 1839.*

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
No, not thee!

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

TIME

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years,
Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality,
And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;
Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea?

LINES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

Far, far away, O ye
Halcyons of Memory,
Seek some far calmer nest
Than this abandoned breast!
No news of your false spring
To my heart's winter bring,
Once having gone, in vain
Ye come again.

II

Vultures, who build your bowers
High in the Future's towers,
Withered hopes on hopes are spread!
Dying joys, choked by the dead,
Will serve your beaks for prey
Many a day.

FROM THE ARABIC: AN IMITATION

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is an intermediate draft amongst the Bodleian MSS. See Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 13.]

I

My faint spirit was sitting in the light
Of thy looks, my love;
It panted for thee like the hind at noon
For the brooks, my love.

Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight
Bore thee far from me;
My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
Did companion thee.

II

Ah! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,
Or the death they bear,
The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
With the wings of care;
In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
Shall mine cling to thee,
Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
It may bring to thee.

TO EMILIA VIVIANI

[Published, i. by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; ii. 1 by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; ii. 2, 3 by H. Buxton Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

I

Madonna, wherefore hast thou sent to me
Sweet-basil and mignonette?
Embleming love and health, which never yet
In the same wreath might be.
Alas, and they are wet!
Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
For never rain or dew
Such fragrance drew
From plant or flower—the very doubt endears
My sadness ever new,
The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.

II

Send the stars light, but send not love to me,
In whom love ever made
Health like a heap of embers soon to fade—

THE FUGITIVES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

The waters are flashing,
The white hail is dashing,
The lightnings are glancing,
The hoar-spray is dancing—
Away!

The whirlwind is rolling,
The thunder is tolling,
The forest is swinging,
The minster bells ringing—
Come away!

The Earth is like Ocean,
Wreck-strewn and in motion:
Bird, beast, man and worm
Have crept out of the storm—
Come away!

II

'Our boat has one sail,
And the helmsman is pale;—
A bold pilot I trow,
Who should follow us now,'—
Shouted he—

From the Arabic—5 hoofs] feet *B.* 7 were] grew *B.* 9 Ah!] O *B.*

And she cried: 'Ply the oar!
Put off gaily from shore!'—
As she spoke, bolts of death
Mixed with hail, specked their path
O'er the sea.

And from isle, tower and rock,
The blue beacon-cloud broke,
And though dumb in the blast,
The red cannon flashed fast
From the lee.

III

And 'Fear'st thou?' and 'Fear'st thou?'
And 'Seest thou?' and 'Hear'st thou?'
And 'Drive we not free
O'er the terrible sea,
I and thou?'

One boat-cloak did cover
The loved and the lover—
Their blood beats one measure,
They murmur proud pleasure
Soft and low;—
While around the lashed Ocean,
Like mountains in motion,
Is withdrawn and uplifted,
Sunk, shattered and shifted
To and fro.

IV

In the court of the fortress
Beside the pale portress,
Like a bloodhound well beaten
The bridegroom stands, eaten
By shame;

On the topmost watch-turret,
As a death-boding spirit,
Stands the gray tyrant father,
To his voice the mad weather
Seems tame;

And with curses as wild
As e'er clung to child,
He devotes to the blast,
The best, loveliest and last
Of his name!

TO ———

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

SONG

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a transcript in the Harvard MS. book.]

I

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

II

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

---

28 And though] Though *edd. 1839.* 57 clung] cling *edd. 1839.*

III

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

IV

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

V

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight!
The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,
And the starry night;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

VI

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

VII

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good;
Between thee and me
What difference? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

VIII

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! Oh, come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

MUTABILITY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Boscombe MSS.]

I

The flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

II

Virtue, how frail it is!
Friendship how rare!
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair!
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy, and all
Which ours we call.

III

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day;
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

LINES WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

[Published with *Hellas*, 1821.]

What! alive and so bold, O Earth?
Art thou not overbold?
What! leapest thou forth as of old

---

9 how *Boscombe MS.*; too *edd. 1824, 1839.* 12 though soon they fall] though soon we *or* so soon they *cj. Rossetti.*

In the light of thy morning mirth,
The last of the flock of the starry fold?
Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead?

How! is not thy quick heart cold?
  What spark is alive on thy hearth?
How! is not *his* death-knell knolled?
  And livest *thou* still, Mother Earth?
Thou wert warming thy fingers old
O'er the embers covered and cold
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled—
What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

'Who has known me of old,' replied Earth,
  'Or who has my story told?
  It is thou who art overbold.'
And the lightning of scorn laughed forth
As she sung, 'To my bosom I fold
All my sons when their knell is knolled,
And so with living motion all are fed,
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

'Still alive and still bold,' shouted Earth,
  'I grow bolder and still more bold.
  The dead fill me ten thousandfold
Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth.
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
Like a frozen chaos uprolled,
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

'Ay, alive and still bold,' muttered Earth,
  'Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled,
  In terror and blood and gold,
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold;
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.'

SONNET: POLITICAL GREATNESS

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a transcript, headed *Sonnet to the Republic of Benevento*, in the Harvard MS. book.]

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
History is but the shadow of their shame,
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts

As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
By force or custom? Man who man would be,
Must rule the empire of himself; in it
Must be supreme, establishing his throne
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

THE AZIOLA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *The Keepsake*, 1829.]

I

'Do you not hear the Aziola cry?
Methinks she must be nigh,'
Said Mary, as we sate
In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought;
And I, who thought
This Aziola was some tedious woman,
Asked, 'Who is Aziola?' How elate
I felt to know that it was nothing human,
No mockery of myself to fear or hate:
And Mary saw my soul,
And laughed, and said, 'Disquiet yourself not;
'Tis nothing but a little downy owl.'

II

Sad Aziola! many an eventide
Thy music I had heard
By wood and stream, meadow and mountain-side,
And fields and marshes wide,—
Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,
The soul ever stirred;
Unlike and far sweeter than them all.
Sad Aziola! from that moment I
Loved thee and thy sad cry.

A LAMENT

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

O WORLD! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

II

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;

The Aziola—4 ere stars] ere the stars *edd. 1839.* 9 or] and *edd. 1839.* 19 them] they *edd. 1839.*

Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more!

REMEMBRANCE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, where it is entitled *A Lament*. Three MS. copies are extant: The Trelawny MS. (*Remembrance*), the Harvard MS. (*Song*) and the Houghton MS.—the last written by Shelley on a flyleaf of a copy of *Adonais*.]

I

Swifter far than summer's flight—
Swifter far than youth's delight—
Swifter far than happy night,
Art thou come and gone—
As the earth when leaves are dead,
As the night when sleep is sped,
As the heart when joy is fled,
I am left lone, alone.

II

The swallow summer comes again—
The owlet night resumes her reign—
But the wild-swan youth is fain
To fly with thee, false as thou.—
My heart each day desires the morrow;
Sleep itself is turned to sorrow;
Vainly would my winter borrow
Sunny leaves from any bough.

III

Lilies for a bridal bed—
Roses for a matron's head—
Violets for a maiden dead—
Pansies let *my* flowers be:
On the living grave I bear
Scatter them without a tear—
Let no friend, however dear,
Waste one hope, one fear for me.

TO EDWARD WILLIAMS

[Published in Ascham's edition of the *Poems*, 1834. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

I

The serpent is shut out from Paradise.
The wounded deer must seek the herb no more
In which its heart-cure lies:
The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower
Like that from which its mate with feignèd sighs
Fled in the April hour.
I too must seldom seek again
Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

II

Of hatred I am proud,—with scorn content;
Indifference, that once hurt me, now is grown
Itself indifferent;
But, not to speak of love, pity alone

Remembrance—5–7 *So edd. 1824, 1839, Trelawny MS., Harvard MS.*; As the wood when leaves are shed, As the night when sleep is fled, As the heart when joy is dead *Houghton MS.* 13 *So edd. 1824, 1839, Harvard MS., Houghton MS.*; My heart to-day desires to-morrow *Trelawny MS.* 20 *So edd. 1824, 1839, Harvard MS., Houghton MS.*; Sadder flowers find for me *Trelawny MS.* 24 one hope, one fear] a hope, a fear *Trelawny MS.* *To Edward Williams*—10 Indifference, which once hurt me, is now grown *Trelawny MS.*

Can break a spirit already more than bent.
The miserable one
Turns the mind's poison into food,—
Its medicine is tears,—its evil good.

III

Therefore, if now I see you seldomer.
Dear friends, dear *friend*! know that I only fly
Your looks, because they stir
Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die:
The very comfort that they minister
I scarce can bear, yet I,
So deeply is the arrow gone,
Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

IV

When I return to my cold home, you ask
Why I am not as I have ever been.
You spoil me for the task
Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,—
Of wearing on my brow the idle mask
Of author, great or mean,
In the world's carnival. I sought
Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

V

Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot
With various flowers, and every one still said,
'She loves me—loves me not.'
And if this meant a vision long since fled—
If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought—
If it meant,—but I dread
To speak what you may know too well:
Still there was truth in the sad oracle.

VI

The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home;
No bird so wild but has its quiet nest,
When it no more would roam;
The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast
Break like a bursting heart, and die in foam,
And thus at length find rest:
Doubtless there is a place of peace
Where *my* weak heart and all its throbs will cease.

VII

I asked her, yesterday, if she believed
That I had resolution. One who *had*
Would ne'er have thus relieved

18 Dear friends, dear *friend Trelawny MS.*, *1839, 2nd ed.*; Dear gentle friend *1834*, *1839, 1st ed.* 26 ever] lately *Trelawny MS.* 28 in *Trelawny MS.*; on *1834*, *edd. 1839.* 43 When *1839, 2nd ed.*; Whence *1834*, *1839, 1st ed.* 48 will *1839, 2nd ed.*; shall *1834*, *1839, 1st ed.*

His heart with words,—but what his judgement bade
Would do, and leave the scorner unrelieved.
These verses are too sad
To send to you, but that I know,
Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

TO ——

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it;
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

II

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,—
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

TO ——

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a Boscombe MS.]

I

When passion's trance is overpast,
If tenderness and truth could last,
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
I should not weep, I should not weep!

II

It were enough to feel, to see,
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest—and burn and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

III

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets reappear;
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move
And form all others, life and love.

A BRIDAL SONG

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

The golden gates of Sleep unbar
Where Strength and Beauty, met together,
Kindle their image like a star
In a sea of glassy weather!
Night, with all thy stars look down,—
Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.
Let eyes not see their own delight;—
Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight
Oft renew.

II

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!
Holy stars, permit no wrong!
And return to wake the sleeper,
Dawn,—ere it be long!
O joy! O fear! what will be done
In the absence of the sun!
Come along!

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53 unrelieved *Trelawny MS., 1839, 2nd ed.*; unreprieved *1834, 1839, 1st ed.* 54 are] were *Trelawny MS.* *To* —— —15 form *Boscombe MS.*; for *edd. 1824, 1839.*

EPITHALAMIUM

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE PRECEDING

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847.]

Night, with all thine eyes look down!
Darkness shed its holiest dew!
When ever smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true?
Hence, coy hour! and quench thy light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew.

Boys.

O joy! O fear! what may be done
In the absence of the sun?
Come along!
The golden gates of sleep unbar!
When strength and beauty meet together,
Kindles their image like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
Hence, coy hour! and quench thy light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew.

Girls.

O joy! O fear! what may be done
In the absence of the sun?
Come along!
Fairies! sprites! and angels, keep her!
Holiest powers, permit no wrong!
And return, to wake the sleeper,
Dawn, ere it be long.
Hence, swift hour! and quench thy light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, coy hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew.

Boys and Girls.

O joy! O fear! what will be done
In the absence of the sun?
Come along!

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE SAME

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870, from the Trelawny MS. of Edward Williams's play, *The Promise: or, A Year, a Month, and a Day.*]

Boys Sing.

Night! with all thine eyes look down!
Darkness! weep thy holiest dew!
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.
Haste, coy hour! and quench all light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Haste, swift hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew!

Girls Sing.

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!
Holy stars! permit no wrong!
And return, to wake the sleeper,
Dawn, ere it be long!
O joy! O fear! there is not one
Of us can guess what may be done
In the absence of the sun:—
Come along!

Boys.

Oh! linger long, thou envious eastern lamp
In the damp
Caves of the deep!

Girls.

Nay, return, Vesper! urge thy lazy car!
Swift unbar
The gates of Sleep!

Epithalamium—17 Lest] Let *1847.*

Chorus.

The golden gate of Sleep unbar,
When Strength and Beauty, met together,
Kindle their image, like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
May the purple mist of love
Round them rise, and with them move,
Nourishing each tender gem
Which, like flowers, will burst from them.
As the fruit is to the tree
May their children ever be!

LOVE, HOPE, DESIRE, AND FEAR

TRANSLATED FROM THE *TESORETTO* OF BRUNETTO LATINI

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

. . . .

And many there were hurt by that strong boy,
His name, they said, was Pleasure,
And near him stood, glorious beyond measure,
Four Ladies who possess all empery
In earth and air and sea,
Nothing that lives from their award is free.
Their names will I declare to thee,
Love, Hope, Desire, and Fear,
And they the regents are
Of the four elements that frame the heart,
And each diversely exercised her art
By force or circumstance or sleight
To prove her dreadful might
Upon that poor domain.
Desire presented her [false] glass, and then
The spirit dwelling there
Was spellbound to embrace what seemed so fair
Within that magic mirror,
And dazed by that bright error,
It would have scorned the [shafts] of the avenger,
And death, and penitence, and danger,
Had not then silent Fear
Touched with her palsying spear,
So that as if a frozen torrent
The blood was curdled in its current;
It dared not speak, even in look or motion,
But chained within itself its proud devotion.
Between Desire and Fear thou wert
A wretched thing, poor heart!
Sad was his life who bore thee in his breast,
Wild bird for that weak nest.
Till Love even from fierce Desire it bought,
And from the very wound of tender thought
Drew solace, and the pity of sweet eyes
Gave strength to bear those gentle agonies,
Surmount the loss, the terror, and the sorrow.
Then Hope approached, she who can borrow
For poor to-day, from rich to-morrow.
And Fear withdrew, as night when day
Descends upon the orient ray,
And after long and vain endurance
The poor heart woke to her assurance.
—At one birth these four were born
With the world's forgotten morn,
And from Pleasure still they hold
All it circles, as of old.
When, as summer lures the swallow,
Pleasure lures the heart to follow—
O weak heart of little wit!
The fair hand that wounded it,
Seeking, like a panting hare,
Refuge in the lynx's lair,
Love, Desire, Hope, and Fear,
Ever will be near.

FRAGMENTS WRITTEN FOR HELLAS

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I

Fairest of the Destinies,
Disarray thy dazzling eyes:
Keener far thy lightnings are
Than the wingèd [bolts] thou bearest,
And the smile thou wearest
Wraps thee as a star
Is wrapped in light.

II

Could Arethuse to her forsaken urn
From Alpheus and the bitter Doris run,
Or could the morning shafts of purest light
Again into the quivers of the Sun
Be gathered—could one thought from its wild flight
Return into the temple of the brain
Without a change, without a stain,—
Could aught that is, ever again
Be what it once has ceased to be.
Greece might again be free!

III

A star has fallen upon the earth
Mid the benighted nations,
A quenchless atom of immorta
light,
A living spark of Night,
A cresset shaken from the constellations.
Swifter than the thunder fell
To the heart of Earth, the well
Where its pulses flow and beat,
And unextinct in that cold source
Burns, and on course
Guides the sphere which is it
prison,
Like an angelic spirit pent
In a form of mortal birth,
Till, as a spirit half-arisen
Shatters its charnel, it has rent
In the rapture of its mirth,
The thin and painted garment of th
Earth,
Ruining its chaos—a fierce breath
Consuming all its forms of livin
death.

FRAGMENT: 'I WOULD NOT BE A KING'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I would not be a king—enough
Of woe it is to love;
The path to power is steep and rough,
And tempests reign above.
I would not climb the imperial throne;
'Tis built on ice which fortune'
sun
Thaws in the height of noon.
Then farewell, king, yet were I on
Care would not come so soon.
Would he and I were far away
Keeping flocks on Himalay!

GINEVRA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated 'Pisa, 1821.']

Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one
Who staggers forth into the air and sun
From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,
Bewildered, and incapable, and ever
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain
Of usual shapes, till the familiar train

Of objects and of persons passed like things
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,
Ginevra from the nuptial altar went;
The vows to which her lips had sworn assent
Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,
And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth,
And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,—
And of the gold and jewels glittering there
She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare
Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,
Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight,
A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
Was less heavenly fair—her face was bowed,
And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair
Were mirrored in the polished marble stair
Which led from the cathedral to the street;
And ever as she went her light fair feet
Erased these images.

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,
Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,
Envying the unenviable; and others
Making the joy which should have been another's
Their own by gentle sympathy; and some
Sighing to think of an unhappy home:
Some few admiring what can ever lure
Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure
Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat; a thing
Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed—and, lo! she stands
Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
Alone within the garden now her own;
And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,
The music of the merry marriage-bells,
Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;—
Absorbed like one within a dream who dreams
That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
A mockery of itself—when suddenly
Antonio stood before her, pale as she.
With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,
He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
And said—'Is this thy faith?' and then as one
Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun
With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise
And look upon his day of life with eyes

22 Was] Were *cj. Rossetti.* 26 ever *1824*; even *edd. 1839.* 37 Bitter *edd. 1839*; Better *1824.*

Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,
Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood
Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
Said—'Friend, if earthly violence or ill,
Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
Of parents, chance or custom, time or change,
Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,
With all their stings and venom can impeach
Our love,—we love not:—if the grave which hides
The victim from the tyrant, and divides
The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart
Imperious inquisition to the heart
That is another's, could dissever ours,
We love not.'—'What! do not the silent hours
Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?
Is not that ring'—a pledge, he would have said,
Of broken vows, but she with patient look
The golden circle from her finger took,
And said—'Accept this token of my faith,
The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;
And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell
Will mix its music with that merry bell,
Does it not sound as if they sweetly said
"We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed"?
The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn
Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
That even the dying violet will not die
Before Ginevra.' The strong fantasy
Had made her accents weaker and more weak,
And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek,
And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere
Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,
Making her but an image of the thought
Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought
News of the terrors of the coming time.
Like an accuser branded with the crime
He would have cast on a belovèd friend,
Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance
Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence—
Antonio stood and would have spoken, when
The compound voice of women and of men
Was heard approaching; he retired, while she
Was led amid the admiring company
Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon
Changed her attire for the afternoon,
And left her at her own request to keep
An hour of quiet and rest:—like one asleep

63 *wanting in 1824.*

With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
Pale in the light of the declining day.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
And in the lighted hall the guests are met;
The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
Of love, and admiration, and delight
Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes,
Kindling a momentary Paradise.
This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude;
On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
Falls, and the dew of music more divine
Tempers the deep emotions of the time
To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:—
How many meet, who never yet have met,
To part too soon, but never to forget.
How many saw the beauty, power and wit
Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet;
But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,
As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,
And unprophetic of the coming hours,
The matin winds from the expanded flowers
Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
From every living heart which it possesses,
Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,
As if the future and the past were all
Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's hall
Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,
Till some one asked—'Where is the Bride?' And then
A bridesmaid went,—and ere she came again
A silence fell upon the guests—a pause
Of expectation, as when beauty awes
All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld;
Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled;—
For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew
The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew
Louder and swifter round the company;
And then Gherardi entered with an eye
Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,
And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light
Mocked at the speculation they had owned.
If it be death, when there is felt around
A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,

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129 winds] lands *cj. Forman*; waves, sands *or* strands *cj. Rossetti.*

And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair
From the scalp to the ankles, as it were
Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
And giving all it shrouded to the earth,
And leaving as swift lightning in its flight
Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night
Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more
Than the unborn dream of our life before
Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore.
The marriage feast and its solemnity
Was turned to funeral pomp—the company,
With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they
Who loved the dead went weeping on their way
Alone, but sorrow mixed with sad surprise
Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,
On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,
Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.
The lamps which, half extinguished in their haste,
Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast,
Showed as it were within the vaulted room
A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom
Had passed out of men's minds into the air.
Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
Friends and relations of the dead,—and he,
A loveless man, accepted torpidly
The consolation that he wanted not;
Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.
Their whispers made the solemn silence seem
More still—some wept, . . .
Some melted into tears without a sob,
And some with hearts that might be heard to throb
Leaned on the table, and at intervals
Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls
And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came
Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame
Of every torch and taper as it swept
From out the chamber where the women kept;—
Their tears fell on the dear companion cold
Of pleasures now departed; then was knolled
The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,
And finding Death their penitent had shrived,
Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon
A vulture has just feasted to the bone.
And then the mourning women came.—

. . . . . .

THE DIRGE.

Old winter was gone
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
And the spring came down
From the planet that hovers upon the shore

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167 On] In *cj. Rossetti.*

Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
On the limits of wintry night;—
If the land, and the air, and the sea,
Rejoice not when spring approaches,
We did not rejoice in thee,
Ginevra!

She is still, she is cold
On the bridal couch,
One step to the white deathbed,
And one to the bier,
And one to the charnel—and one, oh where?
The dark arrow fled
In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled,
The rats in her heart
Will have made their nest,
And the worms be alive in her golden hair,
While the Spirit that guides the sun,
Sits throned in his flaming chair,
She shall sleep.

EVENING: PONTE AL MARE, PISA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a draft amongst the Boscombe MSS.]

I

The sun is set; the swallows are asleep;
The bats are flitting fast in the gray air;
The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,
And evening's breath, wandering here and there
Over the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

II

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
Nor damp within the shadow of the trees;
The wind is intermitting, dry, and light;
And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
The dust and straws are driven up and down,
And whirled about the pavement of the town.

III

Within the surface of the fleeting river
The wrinkled image of the city lay,
Immovably unquiet, and forever
It trembles, but it never fades away;
Go to the . . .
You, being changed, will find it then as now.

6 summer *1839, 2nd ed.*; silent *1824, 1839, 1st ed.*

IV

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut
  By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud.
Like mountain over mountain huddled—but
  Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,
And over it a space of watery blue,
Which the keen evening star is shining through.

THE BOAT ON THE SERCHIO

[Published in part (ll. 1–61, 88–118) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; revised and enlarged by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream.
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,
The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
  Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast,
  And the oars, and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast,
Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there;
To tower, and cavern, and rift, and tree,
The owl and the bat fled drowsily.
Day had kindled the dewy woods,
  And the rocks above and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
  And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,
And clothed with light of aëry gold
The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
  And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee:
Fireflies were quenched on the dewy corn,
  Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
  Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,
  The crickets were still in the meadow and hill:
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each,
  Who shaped us to His ends and not our own;
The million rose to learn, and one to teach
  What none yet ever knew or can be known.
    And many rose

Evening, &c.—20 cinereous *Boscombe MS.*; enormous *edd. 1824, 1839.*

Whose woe was such that fear became desire;—
Melchior and Lionel were not among those;
They from the throng of men had stepped aside,
And made their home under the green hill-side.
It was that hill, whose intervening brow
Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye,
Which the circumfluous plain waving below,
Like a wide lake of green fertility,
With streams and fields and marshes bare,
Divides from the far Apennines—which lie
Islanded in the immeasurable air.

'What think you, as she lies in her green cove,
Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?'
'If morning dreams are true, why I should guess
That she was dreaming of our idleness,
And of the miles of watery way
We should have led her by this time of day.'—

'Never mind,' said Lionel,
'Give care to the winds, they can bear it well
About yon poplar-tops; and see
The white clouds are driving merrily,
And the stars we miss this morn will light
More willingly our return to-night.—
How it whistles, Dominic's long black hair!
List, my dear fellow; the breeze blows fair:
Hear how it sings into the air—'

—'Of us and of our lazy motions,'
Impatiently said Melchior,
'If I can guess a boat's emotions;
And how we ought, two hours before,
To have been the devil knows where.'
And then, in such transalpine Tuscan
As would have killed a Della-Cruscan,

. . . .

So, Lionel according to his art
Weaving his idle words, Melchior said:
'She dreams that we are not yet out of bed;
We'll put a soul into her, and a heart
Which like a dove chased by a dove shall beat.'

. . . .

'Ay, heave the ballast overboard,
And stow the eatables in the aft locker.'
'Would not this keg be best a little lowered?'

58–61 List, my dear fellow, the breeze blows fair;
How it scatters Dominic's long black hair!
Singing of us, and our lazy motions,
If I can guess a boat's emotions.'—*edd. 1824, 1839.*

61–67 *Rossetti places these lines conjecturally between ll.* 51 *and* 52.

'No, now all's right.' 'Those bottles of warm tea—
(Give me some straw)—must be stowed tenderly;
Such as we used, in summer after six,
To cram in greatcoat pockets, and to mix
Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton,
And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbours
Farmers called gaps, and we schoolboys called arbours,
Would feast till eight.'

. . . .

With a bottle in one hand,
As if his very soul were at a stand,
Lionel stood—when Melchior brought him steady:—
'Sit at the helm—fasten this sheet—all ready!'

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,
The living breath is fresh behind,
As, with dews and sunrise fed,
Comes the laughing morning wind;—
The sails are full, the boat makes head
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,
Then flags with intermitting course,
And hangs upon the wave, and stems
The tempest of the . . .
Which fervid from its mountain source
Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,—
Swift as fire, tempestuously
It sweeps into the affrighted sea;
In morning's smile its eddies coil,
Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,
Torturing all its quiet light
Into columns fierce and bright.

The Serchio, twisting forth
Between the marble barriers which it clove
At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm
The wave that died the death which lovers love,
Living in what it sought; as if this spasm
Had not yet passed, the toppling mountains cling,
But the clear stream in full enthusiasm
Pours itself on the plain, then wandering
Down one clear path of effluence crystalline
Sends its superfluous waves, that they may fling
At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine;
Then, through the pestilential deserts wild
Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted pine,
It rushes to the Ocean.

95, 96 and stems The tempest of the *wanting in edd. 1824, 1839.* 112 then *Boscombe MS.*; until *edd. 1824, 1839.* 114 superfluous *Boscombe MS.*; clear *edd. 1824, 1839.* 117 pine *Boscombe MS.*; fir *edd. 1824, 1839.*

MUSIC

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

I PANT for the music which is divine,
  My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
  Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,
I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

II

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
  More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet;
It loosens the serpent which care has bound
  Upon my heart to stifle it;
The dissolving strain, through every vein,
  Passes into my heart and brain.

III

As the scent of a violet withered up,
  Which grew by the brink of a silver lake,
When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup,
  And mist there was none its thirst to slake—
And the violet lay dead while the odour flew
On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue—

IV

As one who drinks from a charmèd cup
  Of foaming, and sparkling, and murmuring wine,
Whom, a mighty Enchantress filling up,
  Invites to love with her kiss divine . . .

SONNET TO BYRON

[Published by Medwin, *The Shelley Papers*, 1832 (ll. 1–7), and *Life of Shelley*, 1847 (ll. 1–9, 12–14). Revised and completed from the Boscombe MS. by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

[I AM afraid these verses will not please you, but]
If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill
Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair
The ministration of the thoughts that fill
The mind which, like a worm whose life may share
A portion of the unapproachable,
Marks your creations rise as fast and fair
As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.

Music—16 mist *1824*; tank *1839, 2nd ed.* *Sonnet to Byron*—1 you *ed. 1870*; him *1832*; thee *1847*. 4 *So ed. 1870*; My soul which as a worm may haply share *1832*; My soul which even as a worm may share *1847*. 6 your *ed. 1870*; his *1832*; thy *1847*.

But such is my regard that nor your power
To soar above the heights where others [climb],
Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour
Cast from the envious future on the time,
Move one regret for his unhonoured name
Who dares these words:—the worm beneath the sod
May lift itself in homage of the God.

FRAGMENT[1] ON KEATS

WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD BE INSCRIBED—

'Here lieth One whose name was writ on water.'
But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,
Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,
Death, the immortalizing winter, flew
Athwart the stream,—and time's printless torrent grew
A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name
Of Adonais!

FRAGMENT: 'METHOUGHT I WAS A BILLOW IN THE CROWD'

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

Methought I was a billow in the crowd
Of common men, that stream without a shore,
That ocean which at once is deaf and loud;
That I, a man, stood amid many more
By a wayside . . . , which the aspect bore
Of some imperial metropolis,
Where mighty shapes—pyramid, dome, and tower—
Gleamed like a pile of crags—

TO-MORROW

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

Where art thou, beloved To-morrow?
When young and old, and strong and weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,
Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,—
In thy place—ah! well-a-day!
We find the thing we fled—To-day.

STANZA

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. Connected by Dowden with the preceding.]

If I walk in Autumn's even
While the dead leaves pass,

8, 9 *So ed. 1870*; *wanting 1832*;
But not the blessings of thy happier lot,
Nor thy well-won prosperity, and fame *1847*.
10, 11 *So ed. 1870*; *wanting 1832, 1847*. 12–14 *So 1847, ed. 1870*; *wanting 1832*.

[1] Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.—Ed.

If I look on Spring's soft heaven,—
  Something is not there which was.
Winter's wondrous frost and snow,
Summer's clouds, where are they now?

FRAGMENT: A WANDERER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

He wanders, like a day-appearing dream,
  Through the dim wildernesses of the mind;
Through desert woods and tracts, which seem
  Like ocean, homeless, boundless, unconfined.

FRAGMENT: LIFE ROUNDED WITH SLEEP

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

The babe is at peace within the womb;
The corpse is at rest within the tomb:
  We begin in what we end.

FRAGMENT: 'I FAINT, I PERISH WITH MY LOVE!'

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

I faint, I perish with my love! I grow
  Frail as a cloud whose [splendours] pale
Under the evening's ever-changing glow:
  I die like mist upon the gale,
And like a wave under the calm I fail.

FRAGMENT: THE LADY OF THE SOUTH

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

Faint with love, the Lady of the South
  Lay in the paradise of Lebanon
Under a heaven of cedar boughs: the drouth
  Of love was on her lips; the light was gone
Out of her eyes—

FRAGMENT: ZEPHYRUS THE AWAKENER

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

Come, thou awakener of the spirit's ocean,
  Zephyr, whom to thy cloud or cave
No thought can trace! speed with thy gentle motion!

FRAGMENT: RAIN

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

The gentleness of rain was in the wind.

FRAGMENT: 'WHEN SOFT WINDS AND SUNNY SKIES'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

When soft winds and sunny skies
With the green earth harmonize,
And the young and dewy dawn,
Bold as an unhunted fawn,
Up the windless heaven is gone,—
Laugh—for ambushed in the day,—
Clouds and whirlwinds watch their prey.

FRAGMENT: 'AND THAT I WALK THUS PROUDLY CROWNED'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

And that I walk thus proudly crowned withal
Is that 'tis my distinction; if I fall,
I shall not weep out of the vital day,
To-morrow dust, nor wear a dull decay.

FRAGMENT: 'THE RUDE WIND IS SINGING

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

The rude wind is singing
  The dirge of the music dead;
The cold worms are clinging
  Where kisses were lately fed.

FRAGMENT: 'GREAT SPIRIT'

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

Great Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought
  Nurtures within its unimagined caves,
In which thou sittest sole, as in my mind,
  Giving a voice to its mysterious waves—

FRAGMENT: 'O THOU IMMORTAL DEITY'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

  O thou immortal deity
Whose throne is in the depth of human thought,
  I do adjure thy power and thee
By all that man may be, by all that he is not,
  By all that he has been and yet must be!

FRAGMENT: THE FALSE LAUREL AND THE TRUE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

'What art thou, Presumptuous, who profanest
The wreath to mighty poets only due,
Even whilst like a forgotten moon thou wanest?
Touch not those leaves which for the eternal few
Who wander o'er the Paradise of fame,
In sacred dedication ever grew:
One of the crowd thou art without a name.'
'Ah, friend, 'tis the false laurel that I wear;
Bright though it seem, it is not the same
As that which bound Milton's immortal hair;
Its dew is poison; and the hopes that quicken
Under its chilling shade, though seeming fair,
Are flowers which die almost before they sicken.'

FRAGMENT: MAY THE LIMNER

[This and the three following Fragments were edited from *MS. Shelley D* 1 at the Bodleian Library and published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903. They are printed here as belonging probably to the year 1821.]

When May is painting with her colours gay
The landscape sketched by April her sweet twin . . .

FRAGMENT: BEAUTY'S HALO

[Published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903.]

Thy beauty hangs around thee like
Splendour around the moon—
Thy voice, as silver bells that strike
Upon

FRAGMENT: 'THE DEATH KNELL IS RINGING'[1]

[Published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903.]

The death knell is ringing
The raven is singing
The earth worm is creeping
The mourners are weeping
Ding dong, bell—

FRAGMENT: 'I STOOD UPON A HEAVEN-CLEAVING TURRET'

I stood upon a heaven-cleaving turret
Which overlooked a wide Metropolis—
And in the temple of my heart my Spirit

---

[1] 'This reads like a study for *Autumn, A Dirge*' (Locock). Might it not be part of a projected *Fit v.* of *The Fugitives*?—Ed.

Lay prostrate, and with parted lips did kiss
The dust of Desolations [altar] hearth—
And with a voice too faint to falter
It shook that trembling fane with its weak prayer
'Twas noon,—the sleeping skies were blue
The city

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1821, BY MRS. SHELLEY

My task becomes inexpressibly painful as the year draws near that which sealed our earthly fate, and each poem, and each event it records, has a real or mysterious connexion with the fatal catastrophe. I feel that I am incapable of putting on paper the history of those times. The heart of the man, abhorred of the poet, who could

> 'peep and botanize
> Upon his mother's grave,'

does not appear to me more inexplicably framed than that of one who can dissect and probe past woes, and repeat to the public ear the groans drawn from them in the throes of their agony.

The year 1821 was spent in Pisa, or at the Baths of San Giuliano. We were not, as our wont had been, alone; friends had gathered round us. Nearly all are dead, and, when Memory recurs to the past, she wanders among tombs. The genius, with all his blighting errors and mighty powers; the companion of Shelley's ocean-wanderings, and the sharer of his fate, than whom no man ever existed more gentle, generous, and fearless; and others, who found in Shelley's society, and in his great knowledge and warm sympathy, delight, instruction, and solace; have joined him beyond the grave. A few survive who have felt life a desert since he left it. What misfortune can equal death? Change can convert every other into a blessing, or heal its sting—death alone has no cure. It shakes the foundations of the earth on which we tread; it destroys its beauty; it casts down our shelter; it exposes us bare to desolation. When those we love have passed into eternity, 'life is the desert and the solitude' in which we are forced to linger—but never find comfort more.

There is much in the *Adonais* which seems now more applicable to Shelley himself than to the young and gifted poet whom he mourned. The poetic view he takes of death, and the lofty scorn he displays towards his calumniators, are as a prophecy on his own destiny when received among immortal names, and the poisonous breath of critics has vanished into emptiness before the fame he inherits.

Shelley's favourite taste was boating; when living near the Thames or by the Lake of Geneva, much of his life was spent on the water. On the shore of every lake or stream or sea near which he dwelt, he had a boat moored. He had latterly enjoyed this pleasure again. There are no pleasure-boats on the Arno; and the shallowness of its waters (except in winter-time, when the stream is too turbid and impetuous for boating) rendered it difficult to get any skiff light enough to float. Shelley, however, overcame the difficulty; he, together with a friend, contrived a boat such as the huntsmen carry about with them in the Maremma, to cross the sluggish but deep streams that intersect the forests,—a boat of laths and pitched canvas. It held three persons; and he was often seen on the Arno in it, to the horror of the Italians, who remonstrated on the danger, and could not understand how any one could take pleasure in an exercise that risked life. 'Ma va per la vita!' they exclaimed. I little thought how true their words would prove. He once ventured, with a friend, on the glassy sea of a calm day, down the Arno and round the coast to Leghorn, which, by keeping close in shore, was very practicable. They returned to Pisa by the canal, when, missing the direct cut, they got entangled among weeds, and the boat upset; a wetting was all the harm done, except that the intense cold of his drenched clothes made Shelley faint. Once I went down with him to the mouth of the Arno, where the stream, then high and swift, met the tideless sea, and disturbed its sluggish waters. It was a waste and dreary scene; the desert sand stretched into a point surrounded by waves that broke idly though perpetually around; it was a scene very similar to Lido, of which he had said—

'I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows.'

Our little boat was of greater use, unaccompanied by any danger, when we removed to the Baths. Some friends lived at the village of Pugnano, four miles off, and we went to and fro to see them, in our boat, by the canal; which, fed by the Serchio, was, though an artificial, a full and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks, sheltered by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day, multitudes of ephemera darted to and fro on the surface; at night, the fireflies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the cicale at noon-day kept up their hum; the aziola cooed in the quiet evening. It was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to the part of the country where chance appeared to cast us. Sometimes he projected taking a farm situated on the height of one of the near hills, surrounded by chestnut and pine woods, and overlooking a wide extent of country: or settling still farther in the maritime Apennines, at Massa. Several of his slighter and unfinished poems were inspired by these scenes, and by the companions around us. It is the nature of that poetry, however, which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life, and away from those he loves, that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.

Still, Shelley's passion was the ocean; and he wished that our summers, instead of being passed among the hills near Pisa, should be spent on the shores of the sea. It was very difficult to find a spot. We shrank from Naples from a fear that the heats would disagree with Percy: Leghorn had lost its only attraction, since our friends who had resided there were returned to England; and, Monte Nero being the resort of many English, we did not wish to find ourselves in the midst of a colony of chance travellers. No one then thought it possible to reside at Via Reggio, which latterly has become a summer resort. The low lands and bad air of Maremma stretch the whole length of the western shores of the Mediterranean, till broken by the rocks and hills of Spezia. It was a vague idea, but Shelley suggested an excursion to Spezia, to see whether it would be feasible to spend a summer there. The beauty of the bay enchanted him. We saw no house to suit us; but the notion took root, and many circumstances, enchained as by fatality, occurred to urge him to execute it.

He looked forward this autumn with great pleasure to the prospect of a visit from Leigh Hunt. When Shelley visited Lord Byron at Ravenna, the latter had suggested his coming out, together with the plan of a periodical work in which they should all join. Shelley saw a prospect of good for the fortunes of his friend, and pleasure in his society; and instantly exerted himself to have the plan executed. He did not intend himself joining in the work: partly from pride, not wishing to have the air of acquiring readers for his poetry by associating it with the compositions of more popular writers; and also because he might feel shackled in the free expression of his opinions, if any friends were to be compromised. By those opinions, carried even to their utmost extent, he wished to live and die, as being in his conviction not only true, but such as alone would conduce to the moral improvement and happiness of mankind. The sale of the work might meanwhile, either really or supposedly, be injured by the free expression of his thoughts; and this evil he resolved to avoid.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1822

THE ZUCCA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated 'January, 1822.' There is a copy amongst the Boscombe MSS.]

I

SUMMER was dead and Autumn was expiring,
  And infant Winter laughed upon the land
All cloudlessly and cold;—when I, desiring
  More in this world than any understand,
Wept o'er the beauty, which, like sea retiring,
  Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand
Of my lorn heart, and o'er the grass and flowers
Pale for the falsehood of the flattering Hours.

II

Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep
  The instability of all but weeping;
And on the Earth lulled in her winter sleep
  I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping.
Too happy Earth! over thy face shall creep
  The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping
From unremembered dreams, shalt   see
No death divide thy immortality.

III

I loved—oh, no, I mean not one of ye,
  Or any earthly one, though ye are dear
As human heart to human heart may be;—
  I loved, I know not what—but this low sphere
And all that it contains, contains not thee,
  Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.
From Heaven and Earth, and all that in them are,
Veiled art thou, like a   star.

IV

By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest,
  Neither to be contained, delayed, nor hidden;
Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,

7 lorn *Boscombe MS.*; poor *ed. 1824.* 23 *So Boscombe MS.*; Dim object of my soul's idolatry *ed. 1824.* 24 star *Boscombe MS.*; *wanting ed. 1824.*

When for a moment thou art not forbidden
To live within the life which thou bestowest;
And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden,
Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,
Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

V

In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,
In music and the sweet unconscious tone
Of animals, and voices which are human,
Meant to express some feelings of their own;
In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,
In flowers and leaves, and in the grass fresh-shown,
Or dying in the autumn, I the most
Adore thee present or lament thee lost.

VI

And thus I went lamenting, when I saw
A plant upon the river's margin lie,
Like one who loved beyond his nature's law,
And in despair had cast him down to die;
Its leaves, which had outlived the frost, the thaw
Had blighted; like a heart which hatred's eye
Can blast not, but which pity kills; the dew
Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

VII

The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth
Had crushed it on her unmaternal breast

. . . .

VIII

I bore it to my chamber, and I planted
It in a vase full of the lightest mould;
The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted
Fell through the window-panes, disrobed of cold,
Upon its leaves and flowers; the stars which panted
In evening for the Day, whose car has rolled
Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light
Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

IX

The mitigated influences of air
And light revived the plant, and from it grew
Strong leaves and tendrils, and its flowers fair,
Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew,
O'erflowed with golden colours; an atmosphere
Of vital warmth enfolded it anew,
And every impulse sent to every part
The unbeheld pulsations of its heart.

38 grass fresh *Boscombe MS.*; fresh grass *ed. 1824.* 46 like *Boscombe MS.*; as *ed. 1824.*

X

Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong,
Even if the air and sun had smiled not on it;
For one wept o'er it all the winter long
Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it
Hour after hour; for sounds of softest song
Mixed with the stringèd melodies that won it
To leave the gentle lips on which it slept,
Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept.

XI

Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers
On which he wept, the while the savage storm
Waked by the darkest of December's hours
Was raving round the chamber hushed and warm;
The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers,
The fish were frozen in the pools, the form
Of every summer plant was dead . . .
Whilst this . . .

. . . .

THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER PATIENT

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, August 11, 1832. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

I

'Sleep, sleep on! forget thy pain;
My hand is on thy brow,
My spirit on thy brain;
My pity on thy heart, poor friend;
And from my fingers flow
The powers of life, and like a sign,
Seal thee from thine hour of woe;
And brood on thee, but may not blend
With thine.

II

'Sleep, sleep on! I love thee not;
But when I think that he
Who made and makes my lot
As full of flowers as thine of weeds,
Might have been lost like thee;
And that a hand which was not mine
Might then have charmed his agony
As I another's—my heart bleeds
For thine.

III

'Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber of
The dead and the unborn
Forget thy life and love;
Forget that thou must wake forever;
Forget the world's dull scorn;
Forget lost health, and the divine
Feelings which died in youth's brief morn;
And forget me, for I can never
Be thine.

IV

'Like a cloud big with a May shower,
My soul weeps healing rain
On thee, thou withered flower!
It breathes mute music on thy sleep;
Its odour calms thy brain!
Its light within thy gloomy breast
Spreads like a second youth again.
By mine thy being is to its deep
Possessed.

---

68 air and sun *Boscombe MS.*; sun and air *ed. 1824* 1, 10 Sleep *Trelawny MS.*, *1839, 2nd ed.*: Sleep on *1832, 1839, 1st ed.* 16 charmed *Trelawny MS.*; chased *1832, edd. 1839.* 21 love] woe *1832.*

V

'The spell is done. How feel you now?'
'Better—Quite well,' replied
The sleeper.—'What would do
You good when suffering and awake?
What cure your head and side?—'
'What would cure, that would kill me, Jane:
And as I must on earth abide
Awhile, yet tempt me not to break
My chain.'

LINES: 'WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

I

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

TO JANE: THE INVITATION

[This and the following poem were published together in their original form as one piece under the title, *The Pine Forest of the Cascine near Pisa*, by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; reprinted in the same shape, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.; republished separately in their present form, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

Best and brightest, come away!
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
To hoar February born.
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,

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42 *so Trelawny MS.*; 'Twould kill me what would cure my pain *1832, edd. 1839.*
6 tones *ed. 1824*; notes *Trelawny MS.*
14 through *ed. 1824*; in *Trelawny MS.*
16 dead *ed. 1824*; lost *Trelawny MS.*
23 choose *ed. 1824*; chose *Trelawny MS.*
25–32 *wanting Trelawny MS.*

It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustomed visitor:—
'I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields;—
Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.—
You with the unpaid bill, Despair,—
You, tiresome verse-reciter, Care,—
I will pay you in the grave,—
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation too, be off!
To-day is for itself enough;
Hope, in pity mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;
Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
After long pain—with all your love,
This you never told me of.'

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea;—
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets,
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. See the Editor's prefatory note to the preceding.]

I

Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
Up,—to thy wonted work! come, trace
The epitaph of glory fled,—
For now the Earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

II

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of Heaven lay;
It seemed as if the hour were one

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34 with *Trelawny MS.*; of *1839, 2nd ed.* 44 moment's *Trelawny MS.*; moment *1839, 2nd ed.* 50 And *Trelawny MS.*; To *1839, 2nd ed.* 53 dun *Trelawny MS.*; dim *1839, 2nd ed.* 6 fled *ed. 1824*; dead *Trelawny MS., 1839, 2nd ed.* 10 Ocean's] Ocean *1839, 2nd ed.*

Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
A light of Paradise.

III

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath,
That under Heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean woods may be.

IV

How calm it was!—the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seemed from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,—
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling, silent life,—
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;
And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

V

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,—
Each seemed as 'twere a little sky
Gulfed in a world below;
A firmament of purple light
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And purer than the day—
In which the lovely forests grew,
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there.
There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,
And through the dark green wood
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.
And all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.
Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast,
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth expressed;
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters, seen.

THE PINE FOREST OF THE CASCINE NEAR PISA

[This, the first draft of *To Jane: The Invitation*, *The Recollection*, was published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and reprinted, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. See Editor's Prefatory Note to *The Invitation*, p. 748, above.]

Dearest, best and brightest,
Come away,
To the woods and to the fields!
Dearer than this fairest day
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle in the brake.

---

42 white *Trelawny MS.*; wide *1839, 2nd ed.* 87 Shelley's *Trelawny MS.*; S——'s *1839, 2nd ed.*

The eldest of the Hours of Spring,
Into the Winter wandering,
Looks upon the leafless wood,
And the banks all bare and rude;
Found, it seems, this halcyon Morn
In February's bosom born,
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
Kissed the cold forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free;
And waked to music all the fountains,
And breathed upon the rigid mountains,
And made the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, Dear.

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
To the pools where winter rains
Image all the roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Sapless, gray, and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun—
To the sandhills of the sea,
Where the earliest violets be.

Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
And do thy wonted work and trace
The epitaph of glory fled;
For now the Earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.

The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the woods, and on the deep
The smile of Heaven lay.

It seemed as if the day were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which shed to earth above the sun
A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the pines that stood,
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
With stems like serpents interlaced.

How calm it was—the silence there
By such a chain was bound,
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound

The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.

It seemed that from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain's waste
To the bright flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced;—

A spirit interfused around,
A thinking, silent life;
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;—

And still, it seemed, the centre of
The magic circle there,
Was one whose being filled with love
The breathless atmosphere.

Were not the crocuses that grew
Under that ilex-tree
As beautiful in scent and hue
As ever fed the bee?

We stood beneath the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,
And each seemed like a sky
Gulfed in a world below;

A purple firmament of light
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And clearer than the day—

In which the massy forests grew
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any waving there.

Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast
Its every leaf and lineament
With that clear truth expressed;

There lay far glades and neighbouring lawn,
And through the dark green crowd
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Under a speckled cloud.

Sweet views, which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.

And all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian air,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A silence sleeping there.

Until a wandering wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from my mind's too faithful eye
Blots thy bright image out.

For thou art good and dear and kind,
The forest ever green,
But less of peace in S —— 's mind,
Than calm in waters, seen.

WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Oct. 20, 1832; *Frazer's Magazine*, Jan. 1833. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

Ariel to Miranda:—Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee,
And teach it all the harmony
In which thou canst, and only thou,
Make the delighted spirit glow,
Till joy denies itself again,
And, too intense, is turned to pain;
For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
From life to life, must still pursue
Your happiness;—for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.
From Prospero's enchanted cell,
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples, he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.
When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity.
Many changes have been run
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps, and served your will;
Now, in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not;
And now, alas! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave;—
From you he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine;
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love; and so this tree,—
O that such our death may be!—
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again:
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,

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12 Of more than ever] Of love that never *1833*. 46 woods *Trelawny MS.*, *1839*, *2nd ed.*; winds *1832*, *1833*, *1839*, *1st ed.* 58 this *Trelawny MS.*, *1839*, *2nd ed.*; that *1832*, *1833*, *1839*, *1st ed.*

And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as thine own;
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells;
For it had learned all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voicèd fountains;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way.—
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The Spirit that inhabits it;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day:
But, sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our belovèd Jane alone.

TO JANE: 'THE KEEN STARS WERE TWINKLING'

[Published in part (ll. 7–24) by Medwin (under the title, *An Ariette for Music. To a Lady singing to her Accompaniment on the Guitar*), *The Athenæum*, Nov. 17, 1832; reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. Republished in full (under the title, *To* ——), *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. The Trelawny MS. is headed *To Jane*. Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in an unknown hand.]

I

The keen stars were twinkling,
And the fair moon was rising among them,
Dear Jane!
The guitar was tinkling,
But the notes were not sweet till you sung them
Again.

II

As the moon's soft splendour
O'er the faint cold starlight of Heaven
Is thrown,
So your voice most tender
To the strings without soul had then given
Its own.

III

The stars will awaken,
Though the moon sleep a full hour later,
To-night;
No leaf will be shaken
Whilst the dews of your melody scatter
Delight.

IV

Though the sound overpowers,
Sing again, with your dear voice revealing
A tone
Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

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61 thine own *Trelawny MS., 1839, 2nd ed.*; its own *1832, 1833, 1839, 1st ed.* 76 on *Trelawny MS., 1839, 2nd ed.*; in *1832, 1833, 1839, 1st ed.* 90 Jane *Trelawny MS.*; friend *1832, 1833, edd. 1839.* 3 Dear * * * *1839, 2nd ed.* 7 soft] pale *Fred. MS.* 10 your *1839, 2nd ed.*; thy *1832, 1839, 1st ed., Fred. MS.* 11 had then *1839, 2nd ed.*; has *1832, 1839, 1st ed.*; hath *Fred. MS.* 12 Its] Thine *Fred. MS.* 17 your *1839, 2nd ed.*; thy *1832, 1839, 1st ed., Fred. MS.* 19 sound] song *Fred. MS.* 20 your dear *1839, 2nd ed.*; thy sweet *1832, 1839, 1st ed.*; thy soft *Fred. MS.*

A DIRGE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

Rough wind, that moanest loud
  Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
  Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,—
  Wail, for the world's wrong!

LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF LERICI

[Published from the Boscombe MSS. by Dr. Garnett, *Macmillan's Magazine*, June, 1862; reprinted, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

She left me at the silent time
When the moon had ceased to climb
The azure path of Heaven's steep,
And like an albatross asleep,
Balanced on her wings of light,
Hovered in the purple night,
Ere she sought her ocean nest
In the chambers of the West.
She left me, and I stayed alone
Thinking over every tone
Which, though silent to the ear,
The enchanted heart could hear,
Like notes which die when born, but still
Haunt the echoes of the hill;
And feeling ever—oh, too much!—
The soft vibration of her touch,
As if her gentle hand, even now,
Lightly trembled on my brow;
And thus, although she absent were,
Memory gave me all of her
That even Fancy dares to claim:—
Her presence had made weak and tame
All passions, and I lived alone
In the time which is our own;
The past and future were forgot,
As they had been, and would be, not.
But soon, the guardian angel gone,
The daemon reassumed his throne
In my faint heart. I dare not speak
My thoughts, but thus disturbed and weak
I sat and saw the vessels glide
Over the ocean bright and wide,
Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent
O'er some serenest element
For ministrations strange and far;
As if to some Elysian star
Sailed for drink to medicine
Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.
And the wind that winged their flight
From the land came fresh and light,
And the scent of wingèd flowers,
And the coolness of the hours
Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day,
Were scattered o'er the twinkling bay.
And the fisher with his lamp
And spear about the low rocks damp
Crept, and struck the fish which came
To worship the delusive flame.
Too happy they, whose pleasure sought
Extinguishes all sense and thought
Of the regret that pleasure leaves,
Destroying life alone, not peace!

LINES: 'WE MEET NOT AS WE PARTED'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I

We meet not as we parted,
  We feel more than all may see;
My bosom is heavy-hearted,
  And thine full of doubt for me:—
  One moment has bound the free.

A Dirge—6 strain *cj. Rossetti*; stain *ed. 1824*. *Lines written, &c.*—11 though silent *Relics 1862*; though now silent *Mac. Mag. 1862*. 31 saw *Relics 1862*; watched *Mac. Mag. 1862*.

II

That moment is gone for ever,
Like lightning that flashed and died—
Like a snowflake upon the river—
Like a sunbeam upon the tide,
Which the dark shadows hide.

III

That moment from time was singled
As the first of a life of pain;
The cup of its joy was mingled
—Delusion too sweet though vain!
Too sweet to be mine again.

IV

Sweet lips, could my heart have hidden
That its life was crushed by you,
Ye would not have then forbidden
The death which a heart so true
Sought in your briny dew.

V

. . . . .
. . . .
. . . . .
Methinks too little cost
For a moment so found, so lost!

THE ISLE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

There was a little lawny islet
By anemone and violet,
Like mosaic, paven:
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun nor showers nor breeze
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
Each a gem engraven;—
Girt by many an azure wave
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm.

FRAGMENT: TO THE MOON

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Bright wanderer, fair coquette of Heaven,
To whom alone it has been given
To change and be adored for ever,
Envy not this dim world, for never
But once within its shadow grew
One fair as ——

EPITAPH

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

These are two friends whose lives were undivided;
So let their memory be, now they have glided
Under the grave; let not their bones be parted,
For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1822, BY MRS. SHELLEY

This morn thy gallant bark
Sailed on a sunny sea:
'Tis noon, and tempests dark
Have wrecked it on the lee.
Ah woe! ah woe!
By Spirits of the deep
Thou'rt cradled on the billow
To thy eternal sleep.

Thou sleep'st upon the shore
Beside the knelling surge,
And Sea-nymphs evermore
Shall sadly chant thy dirge.
They come, they come,
The Spirits of the deep,—
While near thy seaweed pillow
My lonely watch I keep.

From far across the sea
  I hear a loud lament,
By Echo's voice for thee
  From Ocean's caverns sent.
    O list! O list!
The Spirits of the deep!
  They raise a wail of sorrow,
While I forever weep.

With this last year of the life of Shelley these Notes end. They are not what I intended them to be. I began with energy, and a burning desire to impart to the world, in worthy language, the sense I have of the virtues and genius of the beloved and the lost; my strength has failed under the task. Recurrence to the past, full of its own deep and unforgotten joys and sorrows, contrasted with succeeding years of painful and solitary struggle, has shaken my health. Days of great suffering have followed my attempts to write, and these again produced a weakness and languor that spread their sinister influence over these notes. I dislike speaking of myself, but cannot help apologizing to the dead, and to the public, for not having executed in the manner I desired the history I engaged to give of Shelley's writings[1].

The winter of 1822 was passed in Pisa, if we might call that season winter in which autumn merged into spring after the interval of but few days of bleaker weather. Spring sprang up early, and with extreme beauty. Shelley had conceived the idea of writing a tragedy on the subject of Charles I. It was one that he believed adapted for a drama; full of intense interest, contrasted character, and busy passion. He had recommended it long before, when he encouraged me to attempt a play. Whether the subject proved more difficult than he anticipated, or whether in fact he could not bend his mind away from the broodings and wanderings of thought, divested from human interest, which he best loved, I cannot tell; but he proceeded slowly, and threw it aside for one of the most mystical of his poems, the *Triumph of Life*, on which he was employed at the last.

His passion for boating was fostered at this time by having among our friends several sailors. His favourite companion, Edward Ellerker Williams, of the 8th Light Dragoons, had begun his life in the navy, and had afterwards entered the army; he had spent several years in India, and his love for adventure and manly exercises accorded with Shelley's taste. It was their favourite plan to build a boat such as they could manage themselves, and, living on the sea-coast, to enjoy at every hour and season the pleasure they loved best. Captain Roberts, R.N., undertook to build the boat at Genoa, where he was also occupied in building the *Bolivar* for Lord Byron. Ours was to be an open boat, on a model taken from one of the royal dockyards. I have since heard that there was a defect in this model, and that it was never seaworthy. In the month of February, Shelley and his friend went to Spezia to seek for houses for us. Only one was to be found at all suitable; however, a trifle such as not finding a house could not stop Shelley; the one found was to serve for all. It was unfurnished; we sent our furniture by sea, and with a good deal of precipitation, arising from his impatience, made our removal. We left Pisa on the 26th of April.

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[1] I at one time feared that the correction of the press might be less exact through my illness; but I believe that it is nearly free from error. Some asterisks occur in a few pages, as they did in the volume of *Posthumous Poems*, either because they refer to private concerns, or because the original manuscript was left imperfect. Did any one see the papers from which I drew that volume, the wonder would be how any eyes or patience were capable of extracting it from so confused a mass, interlined and broken into fragments, so that the sense could only be deciphered and joined by guesses which might seem rather intuitive than founded on reasoning. Yet I believe no mistake was made.

The Bay of Spezia is of considerable extent, and divided by a rocky promontory into a larger and smaller one. The town of Lerici is situated on the eastern point, and in the depth of the smaller bay, which bears the name of this town, is the village of San Terenzo. Our house, Casa Magni, was close to this village; the sea came up to the door, a steep hill sheltered it behind. The proprietor of the estate on which it was situated was insane; he had begun to erect a large house at the summit of the hill behind, but his malady prevented its being finished, and it was falling into ruin. He had (and this to the Italians had seemed a glaring symptom of very decided madness) rooted up the olives on the hillside, and planted forest trees. These were mostly young, but the plantation was more in English taste than I ever elsewhere saw in Italy; some fine walnut and ilex trees intermingled their dark massy foliage, and formed groups which still haunt my memory, as then they satiated the eye with a sense of loveliness. The scene was indeed of unimaginable beauty. The blue extent of waters, the almost landlocked bay, the near castle of Lerici shutting it in to the east, and distant Porto Venere to the west; the varied forms of the precipitous rocks that bound in the beach, over which there was only a winding rugged footpath towards Lerici, and none on the other side; the tideless sea leaving no sands nor shingle, formed a picture such as one sees in Salvator Rosa's landscapes only. Sometimes the sunshine vanished when the sirocco raged—the 'ponente' the wind was called on that shore. The gales and squalls that hailed our first arrival surrounded the bay with foam; the howling wind swept round our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly, so that we almost fancied ourselves on board ship. At other times sunshine and calm invested sea and sky, and the rich tints of Italian heaven bathed the scene in bright and ever-varying tints.

The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbours of San Terenzo were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they passed on the beach, singing, or rather howling; the women dancing about among the waves that broke at their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud wild chorus. We could get no provisions nearer than Sarzana, at a distance of three miles and a half off, with the torrent of the Magra between; and even there the supply was very deficient. Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have felt ourselves farther from civilization and comfort; but, where the sun shines, the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury, and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively.

At first the fatal boat had not arrived, and was expected with great impatience. On Monday, 12th May, it came. Williams records the long-wished-for fact in his journal: 'Cloudy and threatening weather. M. Maglian called; and after dinner, and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday last, but had been driven back by the prevailing bad winds. A Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her: and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.'—It was thus that short-sighted mortals welcomed Death, he having disguised his grim form in a pleasing mask! The time of the friends was now spent on the sea; the weather became fine, and our whole party often passed the evenings on the water when the wind promised pleasant sailing. Shelley and Williams made longer excursions; they sailed several times to Massa. They had engaged one of the seamen who brought her round, a boy, by name Charles Vivian; and they had not the slightest apprehension of danger. When the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves with alterations in the rigging, and by building a boat of canvas and reeds, as light as possible, to have on board the other for the convenience of landing in waters too shallow for the larger vessel. When Shelley was on board, he had his papers with him; and much of the *Triumph of Life* was written as he sailed or weltered on that sea which was soon to engulf him.

The heats set in in the middle of June; the days became excessively hot. But the sea-breeze cooled the air at noon, and extreme heat always put Shelley in spirits. A long drought had preceded the heat; and prayers for rain were being put up in the churches, and processions of relics for the same effect took place in every town. At this time we received letters announcing the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Genoa. Shelley was very eager to see him. I was confined to my room by severe illness, and could not move; it was agreed that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds! Living on the sea-shore, the ocean became as a plaything: as a child may sport with a lighted stick, till a spark inflames a forest, and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the terrors of the ocean. Our Italian neighbours, even, trusted themselves as far as Massa in the skiff; and the running down the line of coast to Leghorn gave no more notion of peril than a fair-weather inland navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea. Once, some months before, Trelawny had raised a warning voice as to the difference of our calm bay and the open sea beyond; but Shelley and his friend, with their one sailor-boy, thought themselves a match for the storms of the Mediterranean, in a boat which they looked upon as equal to all it was put to do.

On the 1st of July they left us. If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such was over my mind when they went. During the whole of our stay at Lerici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place and genial summer with the shadow of coming misery. I had vainly struggled with these emotions—they seemed accounted for by my illness; but at this hour of separation they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger for them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear; and, a fine breeze rising at twelve, they weighed for Leghorn. They made the run of about fifty miles in seven hours and a half. The *Bolivar* was in port; and, the regulations of the Health-office not permitting them to go on shore after sunset, they borrowed cushions from the larger vessel, and slept on board their boat.

They spent a week at Pisa and Leghorn. The want of rain was severely felt in the country. The weather continued sultry and fine. I have heard that Shelley all this time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiment, he had said the only one that he ever found infallible was the certain advent of some evil fortune when he felt peculiarly joyous. Yet, if ever fate whispered of coming disaster, such inaudible but not unfelt prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess: the distance we were at from all signs of civilization, the sea at our feet, its murmurs or its roaring for ever in our ears,—all these things led the mind to brood over strange thoughts, and, lifting it from everyday life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal. A sort of spell surrounded us; and each day, as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger.

The spell snapped; it was all over; an interval of agonizing doubt—of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root even as they were more baseless—was changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.

There was something in our fate peculiarly harrowing. The remains of those we lost were cast on shore; but, by the quarantine-laws of the coast, we were not permitted to have possession of them—the law with respect to everything cast on land by the sea being that such should be burned, to prevent the possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy; and no representation could alter the law. At length, through the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our Chargé d'Affaires at Florence, we gained permission to receive the ashes after the bodies were consumed. Nothing could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task; he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral-pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there, in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world—whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good,—to be buried with him!

The concluding stanzas of the *Adonais* pointed out where the remains ought to be deposited; in addition to which our beloved child lay buried in the cemetery at Rome. Thither Shelley's ashes were conveyed; and they rest beneath one of the antique weed-grown towers that recur at intervals in the circuit of the massy ancient wall of Rome. He selected the hallowed place himself; there is

> 'the sepulchre,
> Oh, not of him, but of our joy!—
>
> . . . .
>
> And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
> Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
> And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
> Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
> This refuge for his memory, doth stand
> Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
> A field is spread, on which a newer band
> Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
> Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.'

Could sorrow for the lost, and shuddering anguish at the vacancy left behind, be soothed by poetic imaginations, there was something in Shelley's fate to mitigate pangs which yet, alas! could not be so mitigated; for hard reality brings too miserably home to the mourner all that is lost of happiness, all of lonely unsolaced struggle that remains. Still, though dreams and hues of poetry cannot blunt grief, it invests his fate with a sublime fitness, which those less nearly allied may regard with complacency. A year before he had poured into verse all such ideas about death as give it a glory of its own. He had, as it now seems, almost anticipated his own destiny; and, when the mind figures his skiff wrapped from sight by the thunder-storm, as it was last seen upon the purple sea and then, as the cloud of the tempest passed away, no sign remained of where it had been[1]—who but will regard as a prophecy the last stanza of the *Adonais*?

'The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.'

PUTNEY, *May* 1, 1839.

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[1] Captain Roberts watched the vessel with his glass from the top of the lighthouse of Leghorn, on its homeward track. They were off Via Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped them and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onwards, Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished. From that time he could scarcely doubt the fatal truth; yet we fancied that they might have been driven towards Elba or Corsica, and so be saved. The observation made as to the spot where the boat disappeared caused it to be found, through the exertions of Trelawny for that effect. It had gone down in ten fathom water; it had not capsized, and, except such things as had floated from her, everything was found on board exactly as it had been placed when they sailed. The boat itself was uninjured. Roberts possessed himself of her, and decked her; but she proved not seaworthy, and her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian islands, on which she was wrecked.

TRANSLATIONS

[Of the Translations that follow a few were published by Shelley himself, others by Mrs. Shelley in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, or the *Poetical Works*, 1839, and the remainder by Medwin (1834, 1847), Garnett (1862), Rossetti (1870), Forman (1876) and Locock (1903) from the MS. originals. Shelley's *Translations* fall between the years 1818 and 1822.]

HYMN TO MERCURY

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF HOMER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. This alone of the *Translations* is included in the Harvard MS. book. 'Fragments of the drafts of this and the other *Hymns* of Homer exist among the Boscombe MSS.' (Forman).]

I

SING, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove,
The Herald-child, king of Arcadia
And all its pastoral hills, whom in sweet love
Having been interwoven, modest May
Bore Heaven's dread Supreme. An antique grove
Shadowed the cavern where the lovers lay
In the deep night, unseen by Gods or Men,
And white-armed Juno slumbered sweetly then.

II

Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling,
And Heaven's tenth moon chronicled her relief,
She gave to light a babe all babes excelling,
A schemer subtle beyond all belief;
A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing,
A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief,
Who 'mongst the Gods was soon about to thieve,
And other glorious actions to achieve.

III

The babe was born at the first peep of day;
He began playing on the lyre at noon,
And the same evening did he steal away
Apollo's herds;—the fourth day of the moon
On which him bore the venerable May,
From her immortal limbs he leaped full soon,
Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep,
But out to seek Apollo's herds would creep.

IV

Out of the lofty cavern wandering
He found a tortoise, and cried out—'A treasure!'
(For Mercury first made the tortoise sing)
The beast before the portal at his leisure
The flowery herbage was depasturing,
Moving his feet in a deliberate measure
Over the turf. Jove's profitable son
Eying him laughed, and laughing thus begun:—

V

'A useful godsend are you to me now,
King of the dance, companion of the feast,
Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you
Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain-beast,
Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,
You must come home with me and be my guest;
You will give joy to me, and I will do
All that is in my power to honour you.

VI

'Better to be at home than out of door,
So come with me; and though it has been said
That you alive defend from magic power,
I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead.'
Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore,
Lifting it from the grass on which it fed
And grasping it in his delighted hold,
His treasured prize into the cavern old.

13 cow-stealing] *qy.* cattle-stealing?

VII

Then scooping with a chisel of gray steel,
He bored the life and soul out of the beast.—
Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal
Darts through the tumult of a human breast
Which thronging cares annoy—not swifter wheel
The flashes of its torture and unrest
Out of the dizzy eyes—than Maia's son
All that he did devise hath featly done.

VIII

. . . .

And through the tortoise's hard stony skin
At proper distances small holes he made,
And fastened the cut stems of reeds within,
And with a piece of leather overlaid
The open space and fixed the cubits in,
Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all
Symphonious cords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

IX

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
He tried the chords, and made division meet.
Preluding with the plectrum, and there went
Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet
Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
A strain of unpremeditated wit
Joyous and wild and wanton—such you may
Hear among revellers on a holiday.

X

He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal
Dallied in love not quite legitimate;
And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal,
And naming his own name, did celebrate;
His mother's cave and servant maids he planned all
In plastic verse, her household stuff and state,
Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan,—
But singing, he conceived another plan.

XI

. . . .

Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat,
He in his sacred crib deposited
The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet
Rushed with great leaps up to the mountain's head,
Revolving in his mind some subtle feat
Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might
Devise in the lone season of dun night.

XII

Lo! the great Sun under the ocean's bed has
Driven steeds and chariot—the child meanwhile strode
O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows,

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57 stony *Boscombe MS.*, *Harvard MS.*; strong *ed. 1824*.

Where the immortal oxen of the God
Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows,
And safely stalled in a remote abode.—
The archer Argicide, elate and proud,
Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

XIII

He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way,
But, being ever mindful of his craft,
Backward and forward drove he them astray,
So that the tracks which seemed before, were aft;
His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray,
And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft
Of tamarisk, and tamarisk-like sprigs,
And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

XIV

And on his feet he tied these sandals light,
The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray
His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight,
Like a man hastening on some distant way,
He from Pieria's mountain bent his flight;
But an old man perceived the infant pass
Down green Onchestus heaped like beds with grass.

XV

The old man stood dressing his sunny vine:
'Halloo! old fellow with the crookèd shoulder!
You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine
Methinks even you must grow a little older:
Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine,
As you would 'scape what might appal a bolder—
Seeing, see not—and hearing, hear not—and—
If you have understanding—understand.'

XVI

So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast;
O'er shadowy mountain and resounding dell,
And flower-paven plains, great Hermes passed;
Till the black night divine, which favouring fell
Around his steps, grew gray, and morning fast
Wakened the world to work, and from her cell
Sea-strewn, the Pallantean Moon sublime
Into her watch-tower just began to climb.

XVII

Now to Alpheus he had driven all
The broad-foreheaded oxen of the Sun;
They came unwearied to the lofty stall
And to the water-troughs which ever run
Through the fresh fields—and when with rushgrass tall,
Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one
Had pastured been, the great God made them move
Towards the stall in a collected drove.

XVIII

A mighty pile of wood the God then heaped,
And having soon conceived the mystery
Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stripped
The bark, and rubbed them in his palms;—on high
Suddenly forth the burning vapour leaped
And the divine child saw delightedly.—
Mercury first found out for human weal
Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

XIX

And fine dry logs and roots innumerous
He gathered in a delve upon the ground—
And kindled them—and instantaneous
The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around:
And whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus
Wrapped the great pile with glare and roaring sound,
Hermes dragged forth two heifers, lowing loud,
Close to the fire—such might was in the God.

XX

And on the earth upon their backs he threw
The panting beasts, and rolled them o'er and o'er,
And bored their lives out. Without more ado
He cut up fat and flesh, and down before
The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two,
Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore
Pursed in the bowels; and while this was done
He stretched their hides over a craggy stone.

XXI

We mortals let an ox grow old, and then
Cut it up after long consideration,—
But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen
Drew the fat spoils to the more open station
Of a flat smooth space, and portioned them; and when
He had by lot assigned to each a ration
Of the twelve Gods, his mind became aware
Of all the joys which in religion are.

XXII

For the sweet savour of the roasted meat
Tempted him though immortal. Natheless
He checked his haughty will and did not eat,
Though what it cost him words can scarce express,
And every wish to put such morsels sweet
Down his most sacred throat, he did repress;
But soon within the lofty portalled stall
He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

XXIII

And every trace of the fresh butchery
And cooking, the God soon made disappear,
As if it all had vanished through the sky;

He burned the hoofs and horns and head and hair,—
The insatiate fire devoured them hungrily;—
And when he saw that everything was clear,
He quenched the coal, and trampled the black dust,
And in the stream his bloody sandals tossed.

XXIV

All night he worked in the serene moonshine—
But when the light of day was spread abroad
He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine.
On his long wandering, neither Man nor God
Had met him, since he killed Apollo's kine,
Nor house-dog had barked at him on his road;
Now he obliquely through the keyhole passed,
Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

XXV

Right through the temple of the spacious cave
He went with soft light feet—as if his tread
Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave;
Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread
The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave
Lay playing with the covering of the bed
With his left hand about his knees—the right
Held his belovèd tortoise-lyre tight.

XXVI

There he lay innocent as a new-born child,
As gossips say; but though he was a God,
The Goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled,
Knew all that he had done being abroad:
'Whence come you, and from what adventure wild,
You cunning rogue, and where have you abode
All the long night, clothed in your impudence?
What have you done since you departed hence?

XXVII

'Apollo soon will pass within this gate
And bind your tender body in a chain
Inextricably tight, and fast as fate,
Unless you can delude the God again,
Even when within his arms—ah, runagate!
A pretty torment both for Gods and Men
Your father made when he made you!'—'Dear mother,'
Replied sly Hermes, 'wherefore scold and bother?

XXVIII

'As if I were like other babes as old,
And understood nothing of what is what;
And cared at all to hear my mother scold.
I in my subtle brain a scheme have got,
Which whilst the sacred stars round Heaven are rolled
Will profit you and me—nor shall our lot

Be as you counsel, without gifts or food,
To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

XXIX

'But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave
And live among the Gods, and pass each day
In high communion, sharing what they have
Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey;
And from the portion which my father gave
To Phoebus, I will snatch my share away,
Which if my father will not—natheless I,
Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

XXX

'And, if Latona's son should find me out,
I'll countermine him by a deeper plan;
I'll pierce the Pythian temple-walls, though stout,
And sack the fane of everything I can—
Caldrons and tripods of great worth no doubt,
Each golden cup and polished brazen pan,
All the wrought tapestries and garments gay.'—
So they together talked;—meanwhile the Day

XXXI

Aethereal born arose out of the flood
Of flowing Ocean, bearing light to men.
Apollo passed toward the sacred wood,
Which from the inmost depths of its green glen
Echoes the voice of Neptune,—and there stood
On the same spot in green Onchestus then
That same old animal, the vine-dresser,
Who was employed hedging his vineyard there.

XXXII

Latona's glorious Son began:—'I pray
Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green,
Whether a drove of kine has passed this way,
All heifers with crooked horns? for they have been
Stolen from the herd in high Pieria,
Where a black bull was fed apart, between
Two woody mountains in a neighbouring glen,
And four fierce dogs watched there, unanimous as men.

XXXIII

'And what is strange, the author of this theft
Has stolen the fatted heifers every one,
But the four dogs and the black bull are left:—
Stolen they were last night at set of sun,
Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft.—
Now tell me, man born ere the world begun,
Have you seen any one pass with the cows?'—
To whom the man of overhanging brows:

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252 neighbouring] neighbour *Harvard MS.*

XXXIV

'My friend, it would require no common skill
Justly to speak of everything I see:
On various purposes of good or ill
Many pass by my vineyard,—and to me
'Tis difficult to know the invisible
Thoughts, which in all those many minds may be:—
Thus much alone I certainly can say,
I tilled these vines till the decline of day,

XXXV

'And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak
With certainty of such a wondrous thing,
A child, who could not have been born a week,
Those fair-horned cattle closely following,
And in his hand he held a polished stick:
And, as on purpose, he walked wavering
From one side to the other of the road,
And with his face opposed the steps he trod.'

XXXVI

Apollo hearing this, passed quickly on—
No wingèd omen could have shown more clear
That the deceiver was his father's son.
So the God wraps a purple atmosphere
Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone
To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there,
And found their track and his, yet hardly cold,
And cried—'What wonder do mine eyes behold!

XXXVII

'Here are the footsteps of the hornèd herd
Turned back towards their fields of asphodel;—
But *these* are not the tracks of beast or bird,
Gray wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell,
Or manèd Centaur—sand was never stirred
By man or woman thus! Inexplicable!
Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress
The sand with such enormous vestiges?

XXXVIII

'That was most strange—but this is stranger still!'
Thus having said, Phoebus impetuously
Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill,
And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie,
And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will
Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury—
And a delightful odour from the dew
Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

XXXIX

And Phoebus stooped under the craggy roof
Arched over the dark cavern:—Maia's child
Perceived that he came angry, far aloof,

About the cows of which he had been beguiled;
And over him the fine and fragrant woof
Of his ambrosial swaddling-clothes he piled—
As among fire-brands lies a burning spark
Covered, beneath the ashes cold and dark.

XL

There, like an infant who had sucked his fill
And now was newly washed and put to bed,
Awake, but courting sleep with weary will,
And gathered in a lump, hands, feet, and head,
He lay, and his belovèd tortoise still
He grasped and held under his shoulder-blade.
Phoebus the lovely mountain-goddess knew,
Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

XLI

Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook
Of the ample cavern, for his kine, Apollo
Looked sharp; and when he saw them not, he took
The glittering key, and opened three great hollow
Recesses in the rock—where many a nook
Was filled with the sweet food immortals swallow,
And mighty heaps of silver and of gold
Were piled within—a wonder to behold!

XLII

And white and silver robes, all overwrought
With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet—
Except among the Gods there can be nought
In the wide world to be compared with it.
Latona's offspring, after having sought
His herds in every corner, thus did greet
Great Hermes:—'Little cradled rogue, declare
Of my illustrious heifers, where they are!

XLIII

'Speak quickly! or a quarrel between us
Must rise, and the event will be, that I
Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus,
In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;
Nor shall your father nor your mother loose
The bars of that black dungeon—utterly
You shall be cast out from the light of day,
To rule the ghosts of men, unblessed as they.

XLIV

To whom thus Hermes slily answered:—'Son
Of great Latona, what a speech is this!
Why come you here to ask me what is done
With the wild oxen which it seems you miss?
I have not seen them, nor from any one
Have heard a word of the whole business;

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336 hurl *Harvard MS., edd. 1839*; haul *ed. 1824.*

If you should promise an immense reward,
I could not tell more than you now have heard.

XLV

'An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,
And I am but a little new-born thing,
Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong:—
My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling
The cradle-clothes about me all day long,—
Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,
And to be washed in water clean and warm,
And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

XLVI

'O, let not e'er this quarrel be averred!
The astounded Gods would laugh at you, if e'er
You should allege a story so absurd
As that a new-born infant forth could fare
Out of his home after a savage herd.
I was born yesterday—my small feet are
Too tender for the roads so hard and rough:—
And if you think that this is not enough,

XLVII

I swear a great oath, by my father's head,
That I stole not your cows, and that I know
Of no one else, who might, or could, or did.—
Whatever things cows are, I do not know,
For I have only heard the name.'—This said,
He winked as fast as could be, and his brow
Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he,
Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

XLVIII

Apollo gently smiled and said:—'Ay, ay,—
You cunning little rascal, you will bore
Many a rich man's house, and your array
Of thieves will lay their siege before his door,
Silent as night, in night; and many a day
In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore
That you or yours, having an appetite,
Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

XLIX

'And this among the Gods shall be your gift,
To be considered as the lord of those
Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, and shop-lift;—
But now if you would not your last sleep doze;
Crawl out!'—Thus saying, Phoebus did uplift
The subtle infant in his swaddling clothes,
And in his arms, according to his wont,
A scheme devised the illustrious Argiphont.

L

. . . .

. . . .

And sneezed and shuddered—Phoebus on the grass
Him threw, and whilst all that he had designed
He did perform—eager although to pass,
Apollo darted from his mighty mind
Towards the subtle babe the following scoff:—
'Do not imagine this will get you off,

LI

'You little swaddled child of Jove and May!'
And seized him:—'By this omen I shall trace
My noble herds, and you shall lead the way.'—
Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place,
Like one in earnest haste to get away,
Rose, and with hands lifted towards his face
Round both his ears up from his shoulders drew
His swaddling clothes, and—'What mean you to do

LII

'With me, you unkind God?'—said Mercury:
'Is it about these cows you tease me so?
I wish the race of cows were perished!—I
Stole not your cows—I do not even know
What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh
That, since I came into this world of woe,
I should have ever heard the name of one—
But I appeal to the Saturnian's throne.'

LIII

Thus Phoebus and the vagrant Mercury
Talked without coming to an explanation,
With adverse purpose. As for Phoebus, he
Sought not revenge, but only information,
And Hermes tried with lies and roguery
To cheat Apollo.—But when no evasion
Served—for the cunning one his match had found—
He paced on first over the sandy ground.

LIV

. . . .

He of the Silver Bow the child of Jove
Followed behind, till to their heavenly Sire
Came both his children, beautiful as Love,
And from his equal balance did require
A judgement in the cause wherein they strove.
O'er odorous Olympus and its snows
A murmuring tumult as they came arose,—

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402 Round] Roused *ed. 1824 only.*

LV

And from the folded depths of the great Hill,
While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood
Before Jove's throne, the indestructible
Immortals rushed in mighty multitude;
And whilst their seats in order due they fill,
The lofty Thunderer in a careless mood
To Phoebus said:—'Whence drive you this sweet prey,
This herald-baby, born but yesterday?—

LVI

'A most important subject, trifler, this
To lay before the Gods!'—'Nay, Father, nay,
When you have understood the business,
Say not that I alone am fond of prey.
I found this little boy in a recess
Under Cyllene's mountains far away—
A manifest and most apparent thief,
A scandalmonger beyond all belief.

LVII

'I never saw his like either in Heaven
Or upon earth for knavery or craft:—
Out of the field my cattle yester-even,
By the low shore on which the loud sea laughed,
He right down to the river-ford had driven;
And mere astonishment would make you daft
To see the double kind of footsteps strange
He has impressed wherever he did range.

LVIII

'The cattle's track on the black dust, full well
Is evident, as if they went towards
The place from which they came—that asphodel
Meadow, in which I feed my many herds,—
His steps were most incomprehensible—
I know not how I can describe in words
Those tracks—he could have gone along the sands
Neither upon his feet nor on his hands;—

LIX

'He must have had some other stranger mode
Of moving on: those vestiges immense,
Far as I traced them on the sandy road,
Seemed like the trail of oak-toppings:—but thence
No mark nor track denoting where they trod
The hard ground gave:—but, working at his fence,
A mortal hedger saw him as he passed
To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

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488 wrath] ruth *Harvard MS.*

LX

'I found that in the dark he quietly
Had sacrificed some cows, and before light
Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly
About the road—then, still as gloomy night,
Had crept into his cradle, either eye
Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight.
No eagle could have seen him as he lay
Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

LXI

'I taxed him with the fact, when he averred
Most solemnly that he did neither see
Nor even had in any manner heard
Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be;
Nor could he tell, though offered a reward,
Not even who could tell of them to me.'
So speaking, Phoebus sate; and Hermes then
Addressed the Supreme Lord of Gods and Men:—

LXII

'Great Father, you know clearly beforehand
That all which I shall say to you is sooth;
I am a most veracious person, and
Totally unacquainted with untruth.
At sunrise Phoebus came, but with no band
Of Gods to bear him witness, in great wrath,
To my abode, seeking his heifers there,
And saying that I must show him where they are,

LXIII

'Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss.
I know that every Apollonian limb
Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,
As a green bank with flowers—but unlike him
I was born yesterday, and you may guess
He well knew this when he indulged the whim
Of bullying a poor little new-born thing
That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

LXIV

'Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine?
Believe me, dearest Father—such you are—
This driving of the herds is none of mine;
Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,
So may I thrive! I reverence the divine
Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care
Even for this hard accuser—who must know
I am as innocent as they or you.

LXV

'I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals
(It is, you will allow, an oath of might)
Through which the multitude of the Immortals

Pass and repass forever, day and night,
Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals—
That I am guiltless; and I will requite,
Although mine enemy be great and strong,
His cruel threat—do thou defend the young!'

LXVI

So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont
Winked, as if now his adversary was fitted:—
And Jupiter, according to his wont,
Laughed heartily to hear the subtle-witted
Infant give such a plausible account,
And every word a lie. But he remitted
Judgement at present—and his exhortation
Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

LXVII

And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden
To go forth with a single purpose both,
Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden:
And Mercury with innocence and truth
To lead the way, and show where he had hidden
The mighty heifers.—Hermes, nothing loth,
Obeyed the Aegis-bearer's will—for he
Is able to persuade all easily.

LXVIII

These lovely children of Heaven's highest Lord
Hastened to Pylos and the pastures wide
And lofty stalls by the Alphean ford,
Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied
With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd
Out of the stony cavern, Phoebus spied
The hides of those the little babe had slain,
Stretched on the precipice above the plain.

LXIX

'How was it possible,' then Phoebus said,
'That you, a little child, born yesterday,
A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed,
Could two prodigious heifers ever flay?
Even I myself may well hereafter dread
Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May,
When you grow strong and tall.'—He spoke, and bound
Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around.

LXX

He might as well have bound the oxen wild;
The withy bands, though starkly interknit,
Fell at the feet of the immortal child,
Loosened by some device of his quick wit.
Phoebus perceived himself again beguiled,
And stared—while Hermes sought some hole or pit,

Looking askance and winking fast as thought,
Where he might hide himself and not be caught.

LXXI

Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill
Subdued the strong Latonian, by the might
Of winning music, to his mightier will;
His left hand held the lyre, and in his right
The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerable
Up from beneath his hand in circling flight
The gathering music rose—and sweet as Love
The penetrating notes did live and move

LXXII

Within the heart of great Apollo—he
Listened with all his soul, and laughed for pleasure.
Close to his side stood harping fearlessly
The unabashèd boy; and to the measure
Of the sweet lyre, there followed loud and free
His joyous voice; for he unlocked the treasure
Of his deep song, illustrating the birth
Of the bright Gods, and the dark desert Earth:

LXXIII

And how to the Immortals every one
A portion was assigned of all that is;
But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son
Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;—
And, as each God was born or had begun,
He in their order due and fit degrees
Sung of his birth and being—and did move
Apollo to unutterable love.

LXXIV

These words were wingèd with his swift delight:
'You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you
Deserve that fifty oxen should requite
Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now.
Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight,
One of your secrets I would gladly know,
Whether the glorious power you now show forth
Was folded up within you at your birth,

LXXV

'Or whether mortal taught or God inspired
The power of unpremeditated song?
Many divinest sounds have I admired,
The Olympian Gods and mortal men among;
But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired,
And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong,
Yet did I never hear except from thee,
Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

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580 heifer-stealing] heifer-killing *Harvard MS.*

LXXVI

'What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use,
What exercise of subtlest art, has given
Thy songs such power?—for those who hear may choose
From three, the choicest of the gifts of Heaven,
Delight, and love, and sleep,—sweet sleep, whose dews
Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even:—
And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo
Whom the Olympian Muses ever follow:

LXXVII

'And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise
Of song and overflowing poesy;
And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice
Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly;
But never did my inmost soul rejoice
In this dear work of youthful revelry
As now. I wonder at thee, son of Jove;
Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love.

LXXVIII

'Now since thou hast, although so very small,
Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,—
And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall,
Witness between us what I promise here,—
That I will lead thee to the Olympian Hall,
Honoured and mighty, with thy mother dear,
And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee,
And even at the end will ne'er deceive thee.'

LXXIX

To whom thus Mercury with prudent speech:—
'Wisely hast thou inquirèd of my skill:
I envy thee no thing I know to teach
Even this day:—for both in word and will
I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach
All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill
Is highest in Heaven among the sons of Jove,
Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

LXXX

'The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee
Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude
Of his profuse exhaustless treasury;
By thee, 'tis said, the depths are understood
Of his far voice; by thee the mystery
Of all oracular fates,—and the dread mood
Of the diviner is breathed up; even I—
A child—perceive thy might and majesty.

LXXXI

'Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit
Can find or teach;—yet since thou wilt, come take
The lyre—be mine the glory giving it—

Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake
Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit
Of trancèd sound—and with fleet fingers make
Thy liquid-voicèd comrade talk with thee,—
It can talk measured music eloquently.

LXXXII

'Then bear it boldly to the revel loud,
Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state,
A joy by night or day—for those endowed
With art and wisdom who interrogate
It teaches, babbling in delightful mood
All things which make the spirit most elate,
Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play,
Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay.

LXXXIII

'To those who are unskilled in its sweet tongue,
Though they should question most impetuously
Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong—
Some senseless and impertinent reply.
But thou who art as wise as thou art strong
Canst compass all that thou desirest. I
Present thee with this music-flowing shell,
Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

LXXXIV

'And let us two henceforth together feed,
On this green mountain-slope and pastoral plain,
The herds in litigation—they will breed
Quickly enough to recompense our pain,
If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;—
And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain,
Grudge me not half the profit.'—Having spoke,
The shell he proffered, and Apollo took;

LXXXV

And gave him in return the glittering lash,
Installing him as herdsman;—from the look
Of Mercury then laughed a joyous flash.
And then Apollo with the plectrum strook
The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash
Of mighty sounds rushed up, whose music shook
The soul with sweetness, and like an adept
His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

LXXXVI

The herd went wandering o'er the divine mead,
Whilst these most beautiful Sons of Jupiter
Won their swift way up to the snowy head
Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre
Soothing their journey; and their father dread
Gathered them both into familiar

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673 and like *1839, 1st ed.*; as of *ed. 1824, Harvard MS.*

Affection sweet,—and then, and now, and ever,
Hermes must love Him of the Golden Quiver,

LXXXVII

To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded,
Which skilfully he held and played thereon.
He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded
The echo of his pipings; every one
Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded;
While he conceived another piece of fun,
One of his old tricks—which the God of Day
Perceiving, said:—'I fear thee, Son of May;—

LXXXVIII

'I fear thee and thy sly chameleon spirit,
Lest thou should steal my lyre and crookèd bow;
This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit,
To teach all craft upon the earth below;
Thieves love and worship thee—it is thy merit
To make all mortal business ebb and flow
By roguery:—now, Hermes, if you dare
By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

LXXXIX

'That you will never rob me, you will do
A thing extremely pleasing to my heart.'
Then Mercury sware by the Stygian dew,
That he would never steal his bow or dart,
Or lay his hands on what to him was due,
Or ever would employ his powerful art
Against his Pythian fane. Then Phoebus swore
There was no God or Man whom he loved more.

XC

'And I will give thee as a good-will token,
The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness;
A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken,
Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless;
And whatsoever by Jove's voice is spoken
Of earthly or divine from its recess,
It, like a loving soul, to thee will speak,
And more than this, do thou forbear to seek.

XCI

'For, dearest child, the divinations high
Which thou requirest, 'tis unlawful ever
That thou, or any other deity
Should understand—and vain were the endeavour;
For they are hidden in Jove's mind, and I,
In trust of them, have sworn that I would never
Betray the counsels of Jove's inmost will
To any God—the oath was terrible.

713 loving] living *cj. Rossetti.*

XCII

'Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not
To speak the fates by Jupiter designed;
But be it mine to tell their various lot
To the unnumbered tribes of human-kind.
Let good to these, and ill to those be wrought
As I dispense—but he who comes consigned
By voice and wings of perfect augury
To my great shrine, shall find avail in me.

XCIII

'Him will I not deceive, but will assist;
But he who comes relying on such birds
As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist
The purpose of the Gods with idle words,
And deems their knowledge light, he shall have missed
His road—whilst I among my other hoards
His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May,
I have another wondrous thing to say.

XCIV

'There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who
Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings,
Their heads with flour snowed over white and new,
Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings
Its circling skirts—from these I have learned true
Vaticinations of remotest things.
My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms,
They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

XCV

'They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow
Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter
With earnest willingness the truth they know;
But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter
All plausible delusions;—these to you
I give;—if you inquire, they will not stutter;
Delight your own soul with them:—any man
You would instruct may profit if he can.

XCVI

'Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia's child—
O'er many a horse and toil-enduring mule,
O'er jaggèd-jawèd lions, and the wild
White-tuskèd boars, o'er all, by field or pool,
Of cattle which the mighty Mother mild
Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule—
Thou dost alone the veil from death uplift—
Thou givest not—yet this is a great gift.'

XCVII

Thus King Apollo loved the child of May
In truth, and Jove covered their love with joy.
Hermes with Gods and Men even from that day

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761 from *Harvard MS.*; of *edd. 1824, 1839.* 764 their love with joy *Harvard MS.*; them with love and joy, *edd. 1824, 1839.*

Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy,
And little profit, going far astray
Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy,
Of Jove and Maia sprung,—never by me,
Nor thou, nor other songs, shall unremembered be.

HOMER'S HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

Ye wild-eyed Muses, sing the Twins of Jove,
Whom the fair-ankled Leda, mixed in love
With mighty Saturn's Heaven-obscuring Child,
On Taygetus, that lofty mountain wild,
Brought forth in joy: mild Pollux, void of blame,
And steed-subduing Castor, heirs of fame.
These are the Powers who earth-born mortals save
And ships, whose flight is swift along the wave.
When wintry tempests o'er the savage sea
Are raging, and the sailors tremblingly
Call on the Twins of Jove with prayer and vow,
Gathered in fear upon the lofty prow,
And sacrifice with snow-white lambs,—the wind
And the huge billow bursting close behind,
Even then beneath the weltering waters bear
The staggering ship—they suddenly appear,
On yellow wings rushing athwart the sky,
And lull the blasts in mute tranquillity,
And strew the waves on the white Ocean's bed,
Fair omen of the voyage; from toil and dread
The sailors rest, rejoicing in the sight,
And plough the quiet sea in safe delight.

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE MOON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

Daughters of Jove, whose voice is melody,
Muses, who know and rule all minstrelsy,
Sing the wide-wingèd Moon! Around the earth,
From her immortal head in Heaven shot forth,
Far light is scattered—boundless glory springs;
Where'er she spreads her many-beaming wings
The lampless air glows round her golden crown.

But when the Moon divine from Heaven is gone
Under the sea, her beams within abide,
Till, bathing her bright limbs in Ocean's tide,
Clothing her form in garments glittering far,
And having yoked to her immortal car
The beam-invested steeds whose necks on high
Curve back, she drives to a remoter sky

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767 going] wandering *Harvard MS.* 6 steed-subduing *emend. Rossetti*; steel-subduing *1839, 2nd ed.*

A western Crescent, borne impetuously.
Then is made full the circle of her light,
And as she grows, her beams more bright and bright
Are poured from Heaven, where she is hovering then,
A wonder and a sign to mortal men.

The Son of Saturn with this glorious Power
Mingled in love and sleep—to whom she bore
Pandeia, a bright maid of beauty rare
Among the Gods, whose lives eternal are.

Hail Queen, great Moon, white-armed Divinity,
Fair-haired and favourable! thus with thee
My song beginning, by its music sweet
Shall make immortal many a glorious feat
Of demigods, with lovely lips, so well
Which minstrels, servants of the Muses, tell.

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE SUN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

Offspring of Jove, Calliope, once more
To the bright Sun, thy hymn of music pour;
Whom to the child of star-clad Heaven and Earth
Euryphaëssa, large-eyed nymph, brought forth;
Euryphaëssa, the famed sister fair
Of great Hyperion, who to him did bear
A race of loveliest children; the young Morn,
Whose arms are like twin roses newly born,
The fair-haired Moon, and the immortal Sun,
Who borne by heavenly steeds his race doth run
Unconquerably, illuming the abodes
Of mortal Men and the eternal Gods.

Fiercely look forth his awe-inspiring eyes,
Beneath his golden helmet, whence arise
And are shot forth afar, clear beams of light;
His countenance, with radiant glory bright,
Beneath his graceful locks far shines around,
And the light vest with which his limbs are bound,
Of woof aethereal delicately twined,
Glows in the stream of the uplifting wind.
His rapid steeds soon bear him to the West;
Where their steep flight his hands divine arrest,
And the fleet car with yoke of gold, which he
Sends from bright Heaven beneath the shadowy sea.

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE EARTH: MOTHER OF ALL

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

O universal Mother, who dost keep
From everlasting thy foundations deep,
Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee!
All shapes that have their dwelling in the sea,

All things that fly, or on the ground divine
Live, move, and there are nourished—these are thine;
These from thy wealth thou dost sustain; from thee
Fair babes are born, and fruits on every tree
Hang ripe and large, revered Divinity!

The life of mortal men beneath thy sway
Is held; thy power both gives and takes away!
Happy are they whom thy mild favours nourish;
All things unstinted round them grow and flourish.
For them, endures the life-sustaining field
Its load of harvest, and their cattle yield
Large increase, and their house with wealth is filled.
Such honoured dwell in cities fair and free,
The homes of lovely women, prosperously;
Their sons exult in youth's new budding gladness,
And their fresh daughters free from care or sadness,
With bloom-inwoven dance and happy song,
On the soft flowers the meadow-grass among,
Leap round them sporting—such delights by thee
Are given, rich Power, revered Divinity.

Mother of gods, thou Wife of starry Heaven,
Farewell! be thou propitious, and be given
A happy life for this brief melody,
Nor thou nor other songs shall unremembered be.

HOMER'S HYMN TO MINERVA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

I sing the glorious Power with azure eyes,
Athenian Pallas! tameless, chaste, and wise,
Tritogenia, town-preserving Maid,
Revered and mighty; from his awful head
Whom Jove brought forth, in warlike armour dressed,
Golden, all radiant! wonder strange possessed
The everlasting Gods that Shape to see,
Shaking a javelin keen, impetuously
Rush from the crest of Aegis-bearing Jove;
Fearfully Heaven was shaken, and did move
Beneath the might of the Cerulean-eyed;
Earth dreadfully resounded, far and wide;
And, lifted from its depths, the sea swelled high
In purple billows, the tide suddenly
Stood still, and great Hyperion's son long time
Checked his swift steeds, till, where she stood sublime,
Pallas from her immortal shoulders threw
The arms divine; wise Jove rejoiced to view.
Child of the Aegis-bearer, hail to thee,
Nor thine nor others' praise shall unremembered be.

HOMER'S HYMN TO VENUS

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862 ; dated 1818.]

[Vv. 1–55, with some omissions.]

Muse, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite,
Who wakens with her smile the lulled delight
Of sweet desire, taming the eternal kings
Of Heaven, and men, and all the living things
That fleet along the air, or whom the sea,
Or earth, with her maternal ministry,
Nourish innumerable, thy delight
All seek   O crownèd Aphrodite!
Three spirits canst thou not deceive or quell:—
Minerva, child of Jove, who loves too well
Fierce war and mingling combat, and the fame
Of glorious deeds, to heed thy gentle flame.
Diana   golden-shafted queen,
Is tamed not by thy smiles; the shadows green
Of the wild woods, the bow, the . . .
And piercing cries amid the swift pursuit
Of beasts among waste mountains,—such delight
Is hers, and men who know and do the right.
Nor Saturn's first-born daughter, Vesta chaste,
Whom Neptune and Apollo wooed the last,
Such was the will of aegis-bearing Jove;
But sternly she refused the ills of Love,
And by her mighty Father's head she swore
An oath not unperformed, that evermore
A virgin she would live mid deities
Divine: her father, for such gentle ties
Renounced, gave glorious gifts—thus in his hall
She sits and feeds luxuriously. O'er all
In every fane, her honours first arise
From men—the eldest of Divinities.

These spirits she persuades not, nor deceives,
But none beside escape, so well she weaves
Her unseen toils; nor mortal men, nor gods
Who live secure in their unseen abodes.
She won the soul of him whose fierce delight
Is thunder—first in glory and in might.
And, as she willed, his mighty mind deceiving,
With mortal limbs his deathless limbs inweaving,
Concealed him from his spouse and sister fair,
Whom to wise Saturn ancient Rhea bare.
                                        but in return,
In Venus Jove did soft desire awaken,
That by her own enchantments overtaken,
She might, no more from human union free,
Burn for a nursling of mortality.
For once, amid the assembled Deities,
The laughter-loving Venus from her eyes

Shot forth the light of a soft starlight smile,
And boasting said, that she, secure the while,
Could bring at will to the assembled Gods
The mortal tenants of earth's dark abodes,
And mortal offspring from a deathless stem
She could produce in scorn and spite of them.
Therefore he poured desire into her breast
Of young Anchises,
Feeding his herds among the mossy fountains
Of the wide Ida's many-folded mountains, –
Whom Venus saw, and loved, and the love clung
Like wasting fire her senses wild among.

THE CYCLOPS

A SATYRIC DRAMA

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF EURIPIDES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; dated 1819. Amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian there is a copy, 'practically complete,' which has been collated by Mr. C. D. Locock. See *Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 64–70. 'Though legible throughout, and comparatively free from corrections, it has the appearance of being a first draft' (Locock).]

Silenus.	Ulysses.
Chorus of Satyrs.	The Cyclops.

Silenus. O Bacchus, what a world of toil, both now
And ere these limbs were overworn with age,
Have I endured for thee! First, when thou fled'st
The mountain-nymphs who nursed thee, driven afar
By the strange madness Juno sent upon thee;
Then in the battle of the sons of Earth,
When I stood foot by foot close to thy side,
No unpropitious fellow-combatant,
And, driving through his shield my wingèd spear,
Slew vast Enceladus. Consider now,
Is it a dream of which I speak to thee?
By Jove, it is not, for you have the trophies!
And now I suffer more than all before.
For when I heard that Juno had devised
A tedious voyage for you, I put to sea
With all my children quaint in search of you,
And I myself stood on the beakèd prow
And fixed the naked mast; and all my boys
Leaning upon their oars, with splash and strain
Made white with foam the green and purple sea,—
And so we sought you, king. We were sailing
Near Malea, when an eastern wind arose,
And drove us to this waste Aetnean rock;

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23 waste *B.*; wild *1824*; '*cf.* 26, *where* waste *is cancelled for* wild' (Locock).

The one-eyed children of the Ocean God,
The man-destroying Cyclopses, inhabit,
On this wild shore, their solitary caves,
And one of these, named Polypheme, has caught us
To be his slaves; and so, for all delight
Of Bacchic sports, sweet dance and melody,
We keep this lawless giant's wandering flocks.
My sons indeed, on far declivities,
Young things themselves, tend on the youngling sheep,
But I remain to fill the water-casks,
Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering
Some impious and abominable meal
To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it!
And now I must scrape up the littered floor
With this great iron rake, so to receive
My absent master and his evening sheep
In a cave neat and clean. Even now I see
My children tending the flocks hitherward.
Ha! what is this? are your Sicinnian measures
Even now the same, as when with dance and song
You brought young Bacchus to Althaea's halls?

Chorus of Satyrs.

STROPHE

Where has he of race divine
  Wandered in the winding rocks?
Here the air is calm and fine
  For the father of the flocks;—
Here the grass is soft and sweet,
And the river-eddies meet
In the trough beside the cave,
Bright as in their fountain wave.—
Neither here, nor on the dew
  Of the lawny uplands feeding?
Oh, you come!—a stone at you
  Will I throw to mend your breeding;—
Get along, you hornèd thing,
Wild, seditious, rambling!

EPODE

An Iacchic melody
  To the golden Aphrodite
Will I lift, as erst did I
  Seeking her and her delight
With the Maenads, whose white feet
To the music glance and fleet.
Bacchus, O belovèd, where,
Shaking wide thy yellow hair,
Wanderest thou alone, afar?
  To the one-eyed Cyclops, we,
Who by right thy servants are,
  Minister in misery,

In these wretched goat-skins clad,
Far from thy delights and thee.

Silenus. Be silent, sons; command the slaves to drive
The gathered flocks into the rock-roofed cave.
Chorus. Go! But what needs this serious haste, O father?
Silenus. I see a Grecian vessel on the coast,
And thence the rowers with some general
Approaching to this cave.—About their necks
Hang empty vessels, as they wanted food,
And water-flasks.—Oh, miserable strangers!
Whence come they, that they know not what and who
My master is, approaching in ill hour
The inhospitable roof of Polypheme,
And the Cyclopian jaw-bone, man-destroying?
Be silent, Satyrs, while I ask and hear
Whence coming, they arrive the Aetnean hill.
Ulysses. Friends, can you show me some clear water-spring,
The remedy of our thirst? Will any one
Furnish with food seamen in want of it?
Ha! what is this? We seem to be arrived
At the blithe court of Bacchus. I observe
This sportive band of Satyrs near the caves.
First let me greet the elder.—Hail!
Silenus. Hail thou,
O Stranger! tell thy country and thy race.
Ulysses. The Ithacan Ulysses and the king
Of Cephalonia.
Silenus. Oh! I know the man,
Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus.
Ulysses. I am the same, but do not rail upon me.—
Silenus. Whence sailing do you come to Sicily?
Ulysses. From Ilion, and from the Trojan toils.
Silenus. How, touched you not at your paternal shore?
Ulysses. The strength of tempests bore me here by force.
Silenus. The self-same accident occurred to me.
Ulysses. Were you then driven here by stress of weather?
Silenus. Following the Pirates who had kidnapped Bacchus.
Ulysses. What land is this, and who inhabit it?—
Silenus. Aetna, the loftiest peak in Sicily.
Ulysses. And are there walls, and tower-surrounded towns?
Silenus. There are not.—These lone rocks are bare of men.
Ulysses. And who possess the land? the race of beasts?
Silenus. Cyclops, who live in caverns, not in houses.
Ulysses. Obeying whom? Or is the state popular?
Silenus. Shepherds: no one obeys any in aught.
Ulysses. How live they? do they sow the corn of Ceres?
Silenus. On milk and cheese, and on the flesh of sheep.
Ulysses. Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream?
Silenus. Ah! no; they live in an ungracious land.

Ulysses. And are they just to strangers?—hospitable?
Silenus. They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings
Is his own flesh.
Ulysses. What! do they eat man's flesh?
Silenus. No one comes here who is not eaten up.
Ulysses. The Cyclops now—where is he? Not at home?
Silenus. Absent on Aetna, hunting with his dogs.
Ulysses. Know'st thou what thou must do to aid us hence?
Silenus. I know not: we will help you all we can.
Ulysses. Provide us food, of which we are in want.
Silenus. Here is not anything, as I said, but meat.
Ulysses. But meat is a sweet remedy for hunger.
Silenus. Cow's milk there is, and store of curdled cheese.
Ulysses. Bring out:—I would see all before I bargain.
Silenus. But how much gold will you engage to give?
Ulysses. I bring no gold, but Bacchic juice.
Silenus. Oh, joy!
'Tis long since these dry lips were wet with wine.
Ulysses. Maron, the son of the God, gave it me.
Silenus. Whom I have nursed a baby in my arms.
Ulysses. The son of Bacchus, for your clearer knowledge.
Silenus. Have you it now?—or is it in the ship?
Ulysses. Old man, this skin contains it, which you see.
Silenus. Why, this would hardly be a mouthful for me.
Ulysses. Nay, twice as much as you can draw from thence.
Silenus. You speak of a fair fountain, sweet to me.
Ulysses. Would you first taste of the unmingled wine?
Silenus. 'Tis just—tasting invites the purchaser.
Ulysses. Here is the cup, together with the skin.
Silenus. Pour: that the draught may fillip my remembrance.
Ulysses. See!
Silenus. Papaiapax! what a sweet smell it has!
Ulysses. You see it then?—
Silenus. By Jove, no! but I smell it.
Ulysses. Taste, that you may not praise it in words only.
Silenus. Babai! Great Bacchus calls me forth to dance!
Joy! joy!
Ulysses. Did it flow sweetly down your throat?
Silenus. So that it tingled to my very nails.
Ulysses. And in addition I will give you gold.
Silenus. Let gold alone! only unlock the cask.
Ulysses. Bring out some cheeses now, or a young goat.
Silenus. That will I do, despising any master.
Yes, let me drink one cup, and I will give
All that the Cyclops feed upon their mountains.

. . . .

Chorus. Ye have taken Troy and laid your hands on Helen?
Ulysses. And utterly destroyed the race of Priam.

. . . .

Silenus. The wanton wretch! she was bewitched to see
The many-coloured anklets and the chain

Of woven gold which girt the neck of Paris,
And so she left that good man Menelaus.
There should be no more women in the world
But such as are reserved for me alone.—
See, here are sheep, and here are goats, Ulysses,
Here are unsparing cheeses of pressed milk;
Take them; depart with what good speed ye may;
First leaving my reward, the Bacchic dew
Of joy-inspiring grapes.
Ulysses. Ah me! Alas!
What shall we do? the Cyclops is at hand!
Old man, we perish! whither can we fly?
Silenus. Hide yourselves quick within that hollow rock.
Ulysses. 'Twere perilous to fly into the net.
Silenus. The cavern has recesses numberless;
Hide yourselves quick.
Ulysses. That will I never do!
The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced
If I should fly one man. How many times
Have I withstood, with shield immovable.
Ten thousand Phrygians!—if I needs must die,
Yet will I die with glory;—if I live,
The praise which I have gained will yet remain.
Silenus. What, ho! assistance, comrades, haste, assistance!

The Cyclops, Silenus, Ulysses; Chorus.

Cyclops. What is this tumult? Bacchus is not here,
Nor tympanies nor brazen castanets.
How are my young lambs in the cavern? Milking
Their dams or playing by their sides? And is
The new cheese pressed into the bulrush baskets?
Speak! I'll beat some of you till you rain tears—
Look up, not downwards when I speak to you.
Silenus. See! I now gape at Jupiter himself;
I stare upon Orion and the stars.
Cyclops. Well, is the dinner fitly cooked and laid?
Silenus. All ready, if your throat is ready too.
Cyclops. Are the bowls full of milk besides?
Silenus. O'er-brimming;
So you may drink a tunful if you will.
Cyclops. Is it ewe's milk or cow's milk, or both mixed?—
Silenus. Both, either; only pray don't swallow me.
Cyclops. By no means.——

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What is this crowd I see beside the stalls?
Outlaws or thieves? for near my cavern-home
I see my young lambs coupled two by two
With willow bands; mixed with my cheeses lie
Their implements; and this old fellow here
Has his bald head broken with stripes.
Silenus. Ah me!

I have been beaten till I burn with fever.
Cyclops. By whom? Who laid his fist upon your head?
Silenus. Those men, because I would not suffer them
To steal your goods.
Cyclops. Did not the rascals know
I am a God, sprung from the race of Heaven?
Silenus. I told them so, but they bore off your things,
And ate the cheese in spite of all I said,
And carried out the lambs—and said, moreover,
They'd pin you down with a three-cubit collar,
And pull your vitals out through your one eye,
Furrow your back with stripes, then, binding you,
Throw you as ballast into the ship's hold,
And then deliver you, a slave, to move
Enormous rocks, or found a vestibule.
Cyclops. In truth? Nay, haste, and place in order quickly
The cooking-knives, and heap upon the hearth,
And kindle it, a great faggot of wood.—
As soon as they are slaughtered, they shall fill
My belly, broiling warm from the live coals,
Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling caldron.
I am quite sick of the wild mountain game;
Of stags and lions I have gorged enough,
And I grow hungry for the flesh of men.
Silenus. Nay, master, something new is very pleasant
After one thing forever, and of late
Very few strangers have approached our cave.
Ulysses. Hear, Cyclops, a plain tale on the other side.
We, wanting to buy food, came from our ship
Into the neighbourhood of your cave, and here
This old Silenus gave us in exchange
These lambs for wine, the which he took and drank,
And all by mutual compact, without force.
There is no word of truth in what he says,
For slyly he was selling all your store.
Silenus. I? May you perish, wretch—
Ulysses. If I speak false!
Silenus. Cyclops, I swear by Neptune who begot thee,
By mighty Triton and by Nereus old,
Calypso and the glaucous Ocean Nymphs,
The sacred waves and all the race of fishes—
Be these the witnesses, my dear sweet master,
My darling little Cyclops, that I never
Gave any of your stores to these false strangers;—
If I speak false may those whom most I love,
My children, perish wretchedly!
Chorus. There stop!
I saw him giving these things to the strangers.
If I speak false, then may my father perish,
But do not thou wrong hospitality.

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216 Furrow *B.*; Torture (*evidently misread for* Furrow) *1824.*

Cyclops. You lie! I swear that he is juster far
Than Rhadamanthus—I trust more in him.
But let me ask, whence have ye sailed, O strangers?
Who are you? And what city nourished ye?
Ulysses. Our race is Ithacan—having destroyed
The town of Troy, the tempests of the sea
Have driven us on thy land, O Polypheme.
Cyclops. What, have ye shared in the unenvied spoil
Of the false Helen, near Scamander's stream?
Ulysses. The same, having endured a woful toil.
Cyclops. Oh, basest expedition! sailed ye not
From Greece to Phrygia for one woman's sake?
Ulysses. 'Twas the Gods' work—no mortal was in fault.
But, O great Offspring of the Ocean-King,
We pray thee and admonish thee with freedom,
That thou dost spare thy friends who visit thee,
And place no impious food within thy jaws.
For in the depths of Greece we have upreared
Temples to thy great Father, which are all
His homes. The sacred bay of Taenarus
Remains inviolate, and each dim recess
Scooped high on the Malean promontory,
And aëry Sunium's silver-veinèd crag,
Which divine Pallas keeps unprofaned ever,
The Gerastian asylums, and whate'er
Within wide Greece our enterprise has kept
From Phrygian contumely; and in which
You have a common care, for you inhabit
The skirts of Grecian land, under the roots
Of Aetna and its crags, spotted with fire.
Turn then to converse under human laws,
Receive us shipwrecked suppliants, and provide
Food, clothes, and fire, and hospitable gifts;
Nor fixing upon oxen-piercing spits
Our limbs, so fill your belly and your jaws.
Priam's wide land has widowed Greece enough;
And weapon-wingèd murder heaped together
Enough of dead, and wives are husbandless,
And ancient women and gray fathers wail
Their childless age;—if you should roast the rest—
And 'tis a bitter feast that you prepare—
Where then would any turn? Yet be persuaded;
Forgo the lust of your jaw-bone; prefer
Pious humanity to wicked will:
Many have bought too dear their evil joys.
Silenus. Let me advise you, do not spare a morsel
Of all his flesh. If you should eat his tongue
You would become most eloquent, O Cyclops.
Cyclops. Wealth, my good fellow, is the wise man's God,
All other things are a pretence and boast.
What are my father's ocean promontories,

The sacred rocks whereon he dwells, to me?
Stranger, I laugh to scorn Jove's thunderbolt,
I know not that his strength is more than mine.
As to the rest I care not.—When he pours
Rain from above, I have a close pavilion
Under this rock, in which I lie supine,
Feasting on a roast calf or some wild beast,
And drinking pans of milk, and gloriously
Emulating the thunder of high Heaven.
And when the Thracian wind pours down the snow,
I wrap my body in the skins of beasts,
Kindle a fire, and bid the snow whirl on.
The earth, by force, whether it will or no,
Bringing forth grass, fattens my flocks and herds,
Which, to what other God but to myself
And this great belly, first of deities,
Should I be bound to sacrifice? I well know
The wise man's only Jupiter is this,
To eat and drink during his little day,
And give himself no care. And as for those
Who complicate with laws the life of man,
I freely give them tears for their reward.
I will not cheat my soul of its delight,
Or hesitate in dining upon you:—
And that I may be quit of all demands,
These are my hospitable gifts;—fierce fire
And yon ancestral caldron, which o'er-bubbling
Shall finely cook your miserable flesh.
Creep in!—

. . . .

Ulysses. Ai! ai! I have escaped the Trojan toils,
I have escaped the sea, and now I fall
Under the cruel grasp of one impious man.
O Pallas, Mistress, Goddess, sprung from Jove,
Now, now, assist me! Mightier toils than Troy
Are these;—I totter on the chasms of peril;—
And thou who inhabitest the thrones
Of the bright stars, look, hospitable Jove,
Upon this outrage of thy deity,
Otherwise be considered as no God!

Chorus (*alone*).

For your gaping gulf and your gullet wide,
The ravin is ready on every side,
The limbs of the strangers are cooked and done;
There is boiled meat, and roast meat, and meat from the coal,
You may chop it, and tear it, and gnash it for fun,
An hairy goat's-skin contains the whole.
Let me but escape, and ferry me o'er
The stream of your wrath to a safer shore.

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344 ravin *Rossetti*; *spelt* ravine in *B.*, *edd.* 1824, 1839.

The Cyclops Aetnean is cruel and bold,
He murders the strangers
That sit on his hearth,
And dreads no avengers
To rise from the earth.
He roasts the men before they are cold,
He snatches them broiling from the coal,
And from the caldron pulls them whole,
And minces their flesh and gnaws their bone
With his cursèd teeth, till all be gone.
Farewell, foul pavilion:
Farewell, rites of dread!
The Cyclops vermilion,
With slaughter uncloying,
Now feasts on the dead,
In the flesh of strangers joying!
Ulysses. O Jupiter! I saw within the cave
Horrible things; deeds to be feigned in words,
But not to be believed as being done.
Chorus. What! sawest thou the impious Polypheme
Feasting upon your loved companions now?
Ulysses. Selecting two, the plumpest of the crowd,
He grasped them in his hands.—
Chorus. Unhappy man!

. . . .

Ulysses. Soon as we came into this craggy place,
Kindling a fire, he cast on the broad hearth
The knotty limbs of an enormous oak,
Three waggon-loads at least, and then he strewed
Upon the ground, beside the red firelight,
His couch of pine-leaves; and he milked the cows,
And pouring forth the white milk, filled a bowl
Three cubits wide and four in depth, as much
As would contain ten amphorae, and bound it
With ivy wreaths; then placed upon the fire
A brazen pot to boil, and made red hot
The points of spits, not sharpened with the sickle,
But with a fruit tree bough, and with the jaws
Of axes for Aetnean slaughterings[1].
And when this God-abandoned Cook of Hell
Had made all ready, he seized two of us
And killed them in a kind of measured manner;
For he flung one against the brazen rivets
Of the huge caldron, and seized the other
By the foot's tendon, and knocked out his brains
Upon the sharp edge of the craggy stone:
Then peeled his flesh with a great cooking-knife
And put him down to roast. The other's limbs

369 not to be believed *B.*; not believed *1824*. 382 ten *cj. Swinburne*; four *1824*; four *cancelled for* ten (*possibly*) *B.*

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[1] I confess I do not understand this.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

He chopped into the caldron to be boiled.
And I, with the tears raining from my eyes,
Stood near the Cyclops, ministering to him;
The rest, in the recesses of the cave,
Clung to the rock like bats, bloodless with fear.
When he was filled with my companions' flesh,
He threw himself upon the ground and sent
A loathsome exhalation from his maw.
Then a divine thought came to me. I filled
The cup of Maron, and I offered him
To taste, and said:—'Child of the Ocean God,
Behold what drink the vines of Greece produce,
The exultation and the joy of Bacchus.'
He, satiated with his unnatural food,
Received it, and at one draught drank it off,
And taking my hand, praised me:—'Thou hast given
A sweet draught after a sweet meal, dear guest.'
And I, perceiving that it pleased him, filled
Another cup, well knowing that the wine
Would wound him soon and take a sure revenge.
And the charm fascinated him, and I
Plied him cup after cup, until the drink
Had warmed his entrails, and he sang aloud
In concert with my wailing fellow-seamen
A hideous discord—and the cavern rung.
I have stolen out, so that if you will
You may achieve my safety and your own.
But say, do you desire, or not, to fly
This uncompanionable man, and dwell
As was your wont among the Grecian Nymphs
Within the fanes of your belovèd God?
Your father there within agrees to it,
But he is weak and overcome with wine,
And caught as if with bird-lime by the cup,
He claps his wings and crows in doting joy.
You who are young escape with me, and find
Bacchus your ancient friend; unsuited he
To this rude Cyclops.
Chorus. Oh my dearest friend,
That I could see that day, and leave for ever
The impious Cyclops.

. . . .

Ulysses. Listen then what a punishment I have
For this fell monster, how secure a flight
From your hard servitude.
Chorus. O sweeter far
Than is the music of an Asian lyre
Would be the news of Polypheme destroyed.
Ulysses. Delighted with the Bacchic drink he goes
To call his brother Cyclops—who inhabit

416 take] grant (*as alternative*) *B.*

A village upon Aetna not far off.
Chorus. I understand, catching him when alone
You think by some measure to dispatch him,
Or thrust him from the precipice.
Ulysses. Oh no;
Nothing of that kind; my device is subtle.
Chorus. How then? I heard of old that thou wert wise.
Ulysses. I will dissuade him from this plan, by saying
It were unwise to give the Cyclopses
This precious drink, which if enjoyed alone
Would make life sweeter for a longer time.
When, vanquished by the Bacchic power, he sleeps,
There is a trunk of olive wood within,
Whose point having made sharp with this good sword
I will conceal in fire, and when I see
It is alight, will fix it, burning yet,
Within the socket of the Cyclops' eye
And melt it out with fire—as when a man
Turns by its handle a great auger round,
Fitting the framework of a ship with beams,
So will I, in the Cyclops' fiery eye
Turn round the brand and dry the pupil up.
Chorus. Joy! I am mad with joy at your device.
Ulysses. And then with you, my friends, and the old man,
We'll load the hollow depth of our black ship,
And row with double strokes from this dread shore.
Chorus. May I, as in libations to a God,
Share in the blinding him with the red brand?
I would have some communion in his death.
Ulysses. Doubtless: the brand is a great brand to hold.
Chorus. Oh! I would lift an hundred waggon-loads,
If like a wasp's nest I could scoop the eye out
Of the detested Cyclops.
Ulysses. Silence now!
Ye know the close device—and when I call,
Look ye obey the masters of the craft.
I will not save myself and leave behind
My comrades in the cave: I might escape,
Having got clear from that obscure recess,
But 'twere unjust to leave in jeopardy
The dear companions who sailed here with me.

Chorus.

Come! who is first, that with his hand
Will urge down the burning brand
Through the lids, and quench and pierce
The Cyclops' eye so fiery fierce?

Semichorus I. (*Song within.*)

Listen! listen! he is coming,
A most hideous discord humming.

446 by some measure *1824*; with some measures *B.*

Drunken, museless, awkward, yelling,
Far along his rocky dwelling;
Let us with some comic spell
Teach the yet unteachable.
By all means he must be blinded,
If my counsel be but minded.

Semichorus II.

Happy thou made odorous
With the dew which sweet grapes weep,
To the village hastening thus,
Seek the vines that soothe to sleep;
Having first embraced thy friend,
Thou in luxury without end,
With the strings of yellow hair,
Of thy voluptuous leman fair,
Shalt sit playing on a bed!—
Speak! what door is openèd?

Cyclops.

Ha! ha! ha! I'm full of wine,
Heavy with the joy divine,
With the young feast oversated;
Like a merchant's vessel freighted
To the water's edge, my crop
Is laden to the gullet's top.
The fresh meadow grass of spring
Tempts me forth thus wandering
To my brothers on the mountains,
Who shall share the wine's sweet fountains.
Bring the cask, O stranger, bring!

Chorus.

One with eyes the fairest
Cometh from his dwelling;
Some one loves thee, rarest,
Bright beyond my telling.
In thy grace thou shinest
Like some nymph divinest
In her caverns dewy:—
All delights pursue thee,
Soon pied flowers, sweet-breathing,
Shall thy head be wreathing.

Ulysses. Listen, O Cyclops, for I am well skilled
In Bacchus. whom I gave thee of to drink.
Cyclops. What sort of God is Bacchus then accounted?
Ulysses. The greatest among men for joy of life.
Cyclops. I gulped him down with very great delight.
Ulysses. This is a God who never injures men.

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495 thou *cj. Swinburne, Rossetti*; those *1824*; '*the word is doubtful in B.*' (*Locock*). 500 Thou *B.*; There *1824*. 508 merchant's *1824*; merchant *B.*

Cyclops. How does the God like living in a skin?
Ulysses. He is content wherever he is put.
Cyclops. Gods should not have their body in a skin.
Ulysses. If he gives joy, what is his skin to you?
Cyclops. I hate the skin, but love the wine within.
Ulysses. Stay here now: drink, and make your spirit glad.
Cyclops. Should I not share this liquor with my brothers?
Ulysses. Keep it yourself, and be more honoured so.
Cyclops. I were more useful, giving to my friends.
Ulysses. But village mirth breeds contests, broils, and blows.
Cyclops. When I am drunk none shall lay hands on me.—
Ulysses. A drunken man is better within doors.
Cyclops. He is a fool, who drinking, loves not mirth.
Ulysses. But he is wise, who drunk, remains at home.
Cyclops. What shall I do, Silenus? Shall I stay?
Silenus. Stay—for what need have you of pot companions?
Cyclops. Indeed this place is closely carpeted
With flowers and grass.
Silenus. And in the sun-warm noon
'Tis sweet to drink. Lie down beside me now,
Placing your mighty sides upon the ground.
Cyclops. What do you put the cup behind me for?
Silenus. That no one here may touch it.
Cyclops. Thievish one!
You want to drink;—here place it in the midst.
And thou, O stranger, tell how art thou called?
Ulysses. My name is Nobody. What favour now
Shall I receive to praise you at your hands?
Cyclops. I'll feast on you the last of your companions.
Ulysses. You grant your guest a fair reward, O Cyclops.
Cyclops. Ha! what is this? Stealing the wine, you rogue!
Silenus. It was this stranger kissing me because
I looked so beautiful.
Cyclops. You shall repent
For kissing the coy wine that loves you not.
Silenus. By Jupiter! you said that I am fair.
Cyclops. Pour out, and only give me the cup full.
Silenus. How is it mixed? let me observe.
Cyclops. Curse you!
Give it me so.
Silenus. Not till I see you wear
That coronal, and taste the cup to you.
Cyclops. Thou wily traitor!
Silenus. But the wine is sweet.
Ay, you will roar if you are caught in drinking.
Cyclops. See now, my lip is clean and all my beard.
Silenus. Now put your elbow right and drink again.
As you see me drink— . . .
Cyclops. How now?
Silenus. Ye Gods, what a delicious gulp!

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537 Stay here now. drink *B.*; stay here, now drink *1824*.

Cyclops. Guest, take it;—you pour out the wine for me.
Ulysses. The wine is well accustomed to my hand.
Cyclops. Pour out the wine!
Ulysses. I pour; only be silent.
Cyclops. Silence is a hard task to him who drinks.
Ulysses. Take it and drink it off; leave not a dreg.
Oh, that the drinker died with his own draught!
Cyclops. Papai! the vine must be a sapient plant.
Ulysses. If you drink much after a mighty feast,
Moistening your thirsty maw, you will sleep well;
If you leave aught, Bacchus will dry you up.
Cyclops. Ho! ho! I can scarce rise. What pure delight!
The heavens and earth appear to whirl about
Confusedly. I see the throne of Jove
And the clear congregation of the Gods.
Now if the Graces tempted me to kiss
I would not—for the loveliest of them all
I would not leave this Ganymede.
Silenus. Polypheme,
I am the Ganymede of Jupiter.
Cyclops. By Jove, you are; I bore you off from Dardanus.

. . . . .

ULYSSES *and the* CHORUS.

Ulysses. Come, boys of Bacchus, children of high race,
This man within is folded up in sleep,
And soon will vomit flesh from his fell maw;
The brand under the shed thrusts out its smoke,
No preparation needs, but to burn out
The monster's eye;—but bear yourselves like men.
Chorus. We will have courage like the adamant rock,
All things are ready for you here; go in,
Before our father shall perceive the noise.
Ulysses. Vulcan, Aetnean king! burn out with fire
The shining eye of this thy neighbouring monster!
And thou, O Sleep, nursling of gloomy Night,
Descend unmixed on this God-hated beast,
And suffer not Ulysses and his comrades,
Returning from their famous Trojan toils,
To perish by this man, who cares not either
For God or mortal; or I needs must think
That Chance is a supreme divinity,
And things divine are subject to her power.

Chorus.

Soon a crab the throat will seize
Of him who feeds upon his guest,
Fire will burn his lamp-like eyes
In revenge of such a feast!
A great oak stump now is lying
In the ashes yet undying.

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606 God-hated *1824*; God-hating (*as an alternative*) *B.*

Come, Maron, come!
Raging let him fix the doom,
Let him tear the eyelid up
Of the Cyclops—that his cup
May be evil!
Oh! I long to dance and revel
With sweet Bromian, long desired,
In loved ivy wreaths attired;
Leaving this abandoned home—
Will the moment ever come?

Ulysses. Be silent, ye wild things! Nay, hold your peace,
And keep your lips quite close; dare not to breathe,
Or spit, or e'en wink, lest ye wake the monster,
Until his eye be tortured out with fire.
Chorus. Nay, we are silent, and we chaw the air.
Ulysses. Come now, and lend a hand to the great stake
Within—it is delightfully red hot.
Chorus. You then command who first should seize the stake
To burn the Cyclops' eye, that all may share
In the great enterprise.
Semichorus I. We are too far;
We cannot at this distance from the door
Thrust fire into his eye.
Semichorus II. And we just now
Have become lame! cannot move hand or foot.
Chorus. The same thing has occurred to us,—our ankles
Are sprained with standing here, I know not how.
Ulysses. What, sprained with standing still?
Chorus. And there is dust
Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence.
Ulysses. Cowardly dogs! ye will not aid me then?
Chorus. With pitying my own back and my back-bone,
And with not wishing all my teeth knocked out,
This cowardice comes of itself—but stay,
I know a famous Orphic incantation
To make the brand stick of its own accord
Into the skull of this one-eyed son of Earth.
Ulysses. Of old I knew ye thus by nature; now
I know ye better.—I will use the aid
Of my own comrades. Yet though weak of hand
Speak cheerfully, that so ye may awaken
The courage of my friends with your blithe words.
Chorus. This I will do with peril of my life,
And blind you with my exhortations, Cyclops.
Hasten and thrust,
And parch up to dust,
The eye of the beast
Who feeds on his guest.
Burn and blind
The Aetnean hind!

Scoop and draw,
But beware lest he claw
Your limbs near his maw.
Cyclops. Ah me! my eyesight is parched up to cinders.
Chorus. What a sweet paean! sing me that again! 670
Cyclops. Ah me! indeed, what woe has fallen upon me!
But, wretched nothings, think ye not to flee
Out of this rock; I, standing at the outlet,
Will bar the way and catch you as you pass.
Chorus. What are you roaring out, Cyclops?
Cyclops. I perish! 675
Chorus. For you are wicked.
Cyclops. And besides miserable.
Chorus. What, did you fall into the fire when drunk?
Cyclops. 'Twas Nobody destroyed me.
Chorus. Why then no one
Can be to blame.
Cyclops. I say 'twas Nobody
Who blinded me.
Chorus. Why then you are not blind. 680
Cyclops. I wish you were as blind as I am.
Chorus. Nay,
It cannot be that no one made you blind.
Cyclops. You jeer me; where, I ask, is Nobody?
Chorus. Nowhere, O Cyclops.
Cyclops. It was that stranger ruined me:—the wretch 685
First gave me wine and then burned out my eye,
For wine is strong and hard to struggle with.
Have they escaped, or are they yet within?
Chorus. They stand under the darkness of the rock
And cling to it.
Cyclops. At my right hand or left? 690
Chorus. Close on your right.
Cyclops. Where?
Chorus. Near the rock itself.
You have them.
Cyclops. Oh, misfortune on misfortune!
I've cracked my skull.
Chorus. Now they escape you—there.
Cyclops. Not there, although you say so.
Chorus. Not on that side.
Cyclops. Where then?
Chorus. They creep about you on your left. 695
Cyclops. Ah! I am mocked! They jeer me in my ills.
Chorus. Not there! he is a little there beyond you.
Cyclops. Detested wretch! where are you?
Ulysses. Far from you
I keep with care this body of Ulysses.
Cyclops. What do you say? You proffer a new name. 700
Ulysses. My father named me so; and I have taken

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693 *So B.*; Now they escape you there *1824*.

A full revenge for your unnatural feast;
I should have done ill to have burned down Troy
And not revenged the murder of my comrades.
Cyclops. Ai! ai! the ancient oracle is accomplished;
It said that I should have my eyesight blinded
By your coming from Troy, yet it foretold
That you should pay the penalty for this
By wandering long over the homeless sea.
Ulysses. I bid thee weep—consider what I say;
I go towards the shore to drive my ship
To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.
Cyclops. Not so, if, whelming you with this huge stone,
I can crush you and all your men together;
I will descend upon the shore, though blind,
Groping my way adown the steep ravine.
Chorus. And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now,
Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives.

EPIGRAMS

[These four *Epigrams* were published—nos. II and IV without title —by Mrs. Shelley, *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I.—TO STELLA

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO

Thou wert the morning star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled;—
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendour to the dead.

II.—KISSING HELENA

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO

Kissing Helena, together
With my kiss, my soul beside it
Came to my lips, and there I kept it,—
For the poor thing had wandered thither,
To follow where the kiss should guide it,
Oh, cruel I, to intercept it!

III.—SPIRIT OF PLATO

FROM THE GREEK

Eagle! why soarest thou above that tomb?
To what sublime and star-ypaven home
Floatest thou?—
I am the image of swift Plato's spirit,
Ascending heaven; Athens doth inherit
His corpse below.

Spirit of Plato—5 doth *Boscombe MS.*; does *ed. 1839.*

IV.—CIRCUMSTANCE

FROM THE GREEK

A MAN who was about to hang himself,
Finding a purse, then threw away his rope;
The owner, coming to reclaim his pelf,
The halter found, and used it. So is Hope
Changed for Despair—one laid upon the shelf,
We take the other. Under Heaven's high cope
Fortune is God—all you endure and do
Depends on circumstance as much as you.

FRAGMENT OF THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ADONIS

FROM THE GREEK OF BION

[Published by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

I MOURN Adonis dead—loveliest Adonis—
Dead, dead Adonis—and the Loves lament.
Sleep no more, Venus, wrapped in purple woof—
Wake violet-stolèd queen. and weave the crown
Of Death,—'tis Misery calls,—for he is dead.

The lovely one lies wounded in the mountains,
His white thigh struck with the white tooth; he scarce
Yet breathes; and Venus hangs in agony there.
The dark blood wanders o'er his snowy limbs,
His eyes beneath their lids are lustreless,
The rose has fled from his wan lips, and there
That kiss is dead, which Venus gathers yet.

A deep, deep wound Adonis . . .
A deeper Venus bears upon her heart.
See, his belovèd dogs are gathering round—
The Oread nymphs are weeping—Aphrodite
With hair unbound is wandering through the woods,
'Wildered, ungirt, unsandalled—the thorns pierce
Her hastening feet and drink her sacred blood.
Bitterly screaming out, she is driven on
Through the long vales; and her Assyrian boy,
Her love, her husband, calls—the purple blood
From his struck thigh stains her white navel now,
Her bosom, and her neck before like snow.

Alas for Cytherea—the Loves mourn—
The lovely, the beloved is gone!—and now
Her sacred beauty vanishes away.
For Venus whilst Adonis lived was fair—
Alas! her loveliness is dead with him.
The oaks and mountains cry, Ai! ai! Adonis!
The springs their waters change to tears and weep—
The flowers are withered up with grief . . .

23 his *Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry*; her *Boscombe MS., Forman.*

Ai! ai! Adonis is dead
Echo resounds Adonis dead.
Who will weep not thy dreadful woe, O Venus?
Soon as she saw and knew the mortal wound
Of her Adonis—saw the life-blood flow
From his fair thigh, now wasting,—wailing loud
She clasped him, and cried 'Stay, Adonis!
Stay, dearest one, . . .
and mix my lips with thine—
Wake yet a while, Adonis—oh, but once,
That I may kiss thee now for the last time—
But for as long as one short kiss may live—
Oh, let thy breath flow from thy dying soul
Even to my mouth and heart, that I may suck
That . . .'

FRAGMENT OF THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF BION

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS

[Published from the Hunt MSS. by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

YE Dorian woods and waves, lament aloud,—
Augment your tide, O streams, with fruitless tears,
For the belovèd Bion is no more.
Let every tender herb and plant and flower,
From each dejected bud and drooping bloom,
Shed dews of liquid sorrow, and with breath
Of melancholy sweetness on the wind
Diffuse its languid love; let roses blush,
Anemones grow paler for the loss
Their dells have known; and thou, O hyacinth,
Utter thy legend now—yet more, dumb flower,
Than 'Ah! alas!'—thine is no common grief—
Bion the [sweetest singer] is no more.

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

Tὰν ἅλα τὰν γλαυκὰν ὅταν ὤνεμος ἀτρέμα βάλλῃ—κ.τ.λ.

WHEN winds that move not its calm surface sweep
The azure sea, I love the land no more;
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar
Of Ocean's gray abyss resounds, and foam
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,
I turn from the drear aspect to the home
Of Earth and its deep woods, where, interspersed,
When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody.
Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,

Death of Bion—2 tears] sorrow (*as alternative*) *Hunt MS.*

Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot
Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling
Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring
Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not

PAN, ECHO, AND THE SATYR

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS

[Published (without title) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a draft amongst the Hunt MSS.]

Pan loved his neighbour Echo—but that child
 Of Earth and Air pined for the Satyr leaping;
The Satyr loved with wasting madness wild
 The bright nymph Lyda,—and so three went weeping.
As Pan loved Echo, Echo loved the Satyr,
 The Satyr, Lyda; and so love consumed them.—
And thus to each—which was a woful matter—
 To bear what they inflicted Justice doomed them;
For, inasmuch as each might hate the lover,
 Each, loving, so was hated.—Ye that love not
Be warned—in thought turn this example over,
 That when ye love, the like return ye prove not.

FROM VERGIL'S TENTH ECLOGUE

[Vv. 1-26]

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870, from the Boscombe MSS. now in the Bodleian. Mr. Locock (*Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 47-50), as the result of his collation of the same MSS., gives a revised and expanded version which we print below.]

Melodious Arethusa, o'er my verse
 Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream:
Who denies verse to Gallus? So, when thou
 Glidest beneath the green and purple gleam
Of Syracusan waters, mayst thou flow
 Unmingled with the bitter Doric dew!
Begin, and, whilst the goats are browsing now
 The soft leaves, in our way let us pursue
The melancholy loves of Gallus. List!
 We sing not to the dead: the wild woods knew
His sufferings, and their echoes . . .
 Young Naiads, . . . in what far woodlands wild
Wandered ye when unworthy love possessed
 Your Gallus? Not where Pindus is up-piled,
Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where
 Aonian Aganippe expands . . .
The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim.
 The pine-encircled mountain, Maenalus,

Pan, Echo, &c.—6 so *Hunt MS.*; thus *1824.* 11 *So 1824*; This lesson timely in your thoughts turn over, The moral of this song in thought turn over (*as alternatives*) *Hunt MS.*

The cold crags of Lycaeus, weep for him;
And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals,
Came shaking in his speed the budding wands
And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew
Pan the Arcadian.

. . . .

'What madness is this, Gallus? Thy heart's care
With willing steps pursues another there.'

THE SAME

(As revised by Mr. C. D. Locock.)

Melodious Arethusa, o'er my verse
Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream:

(Two lines missing)

Who denies verse to Gallus? So, when thou
Glidest beneath the green and purple gleam
Of Syracusan waters, mayest thou flow
Unmingled with the bitter Dorian dew!
Begin, and whilst the goats are browsing now
The soft leaves, in our song let us pursue
The melancholy loves of Gallus. List!
We sing not to the deaf: the wild woods knew
His sufferings, and their echoes answer . . . .
Young Naiades, in what far woodlands wild
Wandered ye, when unworthy love possessed
Our Gallus? Nor where Pindus is up-piled,
Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where
Aonian Aganippe spreads its . . . .

(Three lines missing)

The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim,
The pine-encircled mountain, Maenalus,
The cold crags of Lycaeus weep for him.

(Several lines missing)

'What madness is this, Gallus? thy heart's care,
Lycoris, mid rude camps and Alpine snow,
With willing step pursues another there.'

(Some lines missing)

And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals,
Came shaking in his speed the budding wands
And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew
Pan the Arcadian with . . . .
. . . and said,
'Wilt thou not ever cease? Love cares not.
The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,
The goats with the green leaves of budding spring
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.'

FROM VERGIL'S FOURTH GEORGIC

[Vv. 360 et seq.]

[Published by Locock, *Examination*, etc., 1903.]

And the cloven waters like a chasm of mountains
Stood, and received him in its mighty portal
And led him through the deep's untrampled fountains

He went in wonder through the path immortal
Of his great Mother and her humid reign
And groves profaned not by the step of mortal

Which sounded as he passed, and lakes which rain
Replenished not girt round by marble caves
'Wildered by the watery motion of the main

Half 'wildered he beheld the bursting waves
Of every stream beneath the mighty earth
Phasis and Lycus which the   sand paves,

[And] The chasm where old Enipeus has its birth
And father Tyber and Anienas[?] glow
And whence Caicus, Mysian stream, comes forth

And rock-resounding Hypanis, and thou
Eridanus who bearest like empire's sign
Two golden horns upon thy taurine brow

Thou than whom none of the streams divine
Through garden-fields and meads with fiercer power,
Burst in their tumult on the purple brine

SONNET

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816; reprinted, *P. P.*, 1824.]

Dante Alighieri to Guido Cavalcanti

Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I,
Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend
A magic ship, whose charmèd sails should fly
With winds at will where'er our thoughts might wend,
So that no change, nor any evil chance
Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be,
That even satiety should still enhance
Between our hearts their strict community:
And that the bounteous wizard then would place
Vanna and Bice and my gentle love,
Companions of our wandering, and would grace
With passionate talk, wherever we might rove,
Our time, and each were as content and free
As I believe that thou and I should be.

Sonnet—5 So *1824*; And *1816*.

THE FIRST CANZONE OF THE CONVITO

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; dated 1820.]

I

Ye who intelligent the Third Heaven move,
Hear the discourse which is within my heart,
Which cannot be declared, it seems so new.
The Heaven whose course follows your power and art,
Oh, gentle creatures that ye are! me drew,
And therefore may I dare to speak to you,
Even of the life which now I live—and yet
I pray that ye will hear me when I cry,
And tell of mine own heart this novelty;
How the lamenting Spirit moans in it,
And how a voice there murmurs against her
Who came on the refulgence of your sphere.

II

A sweet Thought, which was once the life within
This heavy heart, many a time and oft
Went up before our Father's feet, and there
It saw a glorious Lady throned aloft;
And its sweet talk of her my soul did win,
So that I said, 'Thither I too will fare.'
That Thought is fled, and one doth now appear
Which tyrannizes me with such fierce stress,
That my heart trembles—ye may see it leap—
And on another Lady bids me keep
Mine eyes, and says—Who would have blessedness
Let him but look upon that Lady's eyes,
Let him not fear the agony of sighs.

III

This lowly Thought, which once would talk with me
Of a bright seraph sitting crowned on high,
Found such a cruel foe it died, and so
My Spirit wept, the grief is hot even now—
And said, Alas for me! how swift could flee
That piteous Thought which did my life console!
And the afflicted one   questioning
Mine eyes, if such a Lady saw they never,
And why they would . . .
I said: 'Beneath those eyes might stand for ever
He whom   regards must kill with . . .
To have known their power stood me in little stead,
Those eyes have looked on me, and I am dead.'

IV

'Thou art not dead, but thou hast wanderèd,
Thou Soul of ours, who thyself dost fret,'
A Spirit of gentle Love beside me said;
For that fair Lady, whom thou dost regret,

Hath so transformed the life which thou hast led,
Thou scornest it, so worthless art thou made.
And see how meek, how pitiful, how staid,
Yet courteous, in her majesty she is.
  And still call thou her Woman in thy thought;
  Her whom, if thou thyself deceivest not,
Thou wilt behold decked with such loveliness,
That thou wilt cry [Love] only Lord, lo! here
Thy handmaiden, do what thou wilt with her.

V[1]

My song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
  Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning
    Of such hard matter dost thou entertain.
  Whence, if by misadventure chance should bring
Thee to base company, as chance may do,
    Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
    I prithee comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight; tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

MATILDA GATHERING FLOWERS

FROM THE PURGATORIO OF DANTE, CANTO XXVIII, ll. 1–51

[Published in part (ll. 1–8, 22–51) by Medwin, *The Angler in Wales*, 1834, *Life of Shelley*, 1847; reprinted in full by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

And earnest to explore within—around—
The divine wood, whose thick green living woof
Tempered the young day to the sight—I wound

Up the green slope, beneath the forest's roof,
With slow, soft steps leaving the mountain's steep,
And sought those inmost labyrinths, motion-proof

Against the air, that in that stillness deep
And solemn, struck upon my forehead bare,
The slow, soft stroke of a continuous . . .

In which the   leaves tremblingly were
All bent towards that part where earliest
The sacred hill obscures the morning air.

[1] Published with *Epipsychidion*, 1821.—Ed.

2 The *1862*; That *1834*. 4, 5 *So 1862*;
Up a green slope, beneath the starry roof,
With slow, slow steps— *1834*.

6 inmost *1862*; leafy *1834*. 9 *So 1862*; The slow, soft stroke of a continuous sleep *cj. Rossetti, 1870*. 9–28 *So 1862*;

Like the sweet breathing of a child asleep:
Already I had lost myself so far
Amid that tangled wilderness that I
Perceived not where I ventured, but no fear

Yet were they not so shaken from the rest,
But that the birds, perched on the utmost spray,
Incessantly renewing their blithe quest,

With perfect joy received the early day,
Singing within the glancing leaves, whose sound
Kept a low burden to their roundelay,

Such as from bough to bough gathers around
The pine forest on bleak Chiassi's shore,
When Aeolus Sirocco has unbound.

My slow steps had already borne me o'er
Such space within the antique wood, that I
Perceived not where I entered any more,—

When, lo! a stream whose little waves went by,
Bending towards the left through grass that grew
Upon its bank, impeded suddenly

My going on. Water of purest hue
On earth, would appear turbid and impure
Compared with this, whose unconcealing dew,

Dark, dark, yet clear, moved under the obscure
Eternal shades, whose interwoven looms
The rays of moon or sunlight ne'er endure.

I moved not with my feet, but mid the glooms
Pierced with my charmèd eye, contemplating
The mighty multitude of fresh May blooms

Which starred that night, when, even as a thing
That suddenly, for blank astonishment,
Charms every sense, and makes all thought take wing,-

A solitary woman! and she went
Singing and gathering flower after flower,
With which her way was painted and besprent.

'Bright lady, who, if looks had ever power
To bear true witness of the heart within,
Dost bask under the beams of love, come lower

> Of wandering from my way disturbed, when nigh
> A little stream appeared; the grass that grew
> Thick on its banks impeded suddenly
> My going on. *1834.*

13 the *1862*; their *cj. Rossetti, 1870.* 26 through] the *cj. Rossetti.* 28 hue *1862*; dew *1834.* 30 dew *1862*; hue *1834.* 32 Eternal shades *1862*; Of the close boughs *1834.* 33 *So 1862*; No ray of moon or sunshine would endure *1834.* 34, 35 *So 1862*;

> My feet were motionless, but mid the glooms
> Darted my charmèd eyes— *1834.*

37 Which *1834*; That *1862.* 39 *So 1834*; Dissolves all other thought ... *1862.* 40 *So 1862*; Appeared a solitary maid—she went *1834.*

Towards this bank. I prithee let me win
This much of thee, to come, that I may hear
Thy song: like Proserpine, in Enna's glen,

Thou seemest to my fancy, singing here
And gathering flowers, as that fair maiden when
She lost the Spring, and Ceres her, more dear.'

FRAGMENT

ADAPTED FROM THE VITA NUOVA OF DANTE

[Published by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

WHAT Mary is when she a little smiles
I cannot even tell or call to mind,
It is a miracle so new, so rare.

UGOLINO[1]

INFERNO xxxiii. 22-75

[Translated by Medwin and corrected by Shelley.]

Now had the loophole of that dungeon, still
Which bears the name of Famine's Tower from me,
And where 'tis fit that many another will

Be doomed to linger in captivity,
Shown through its narrow opening in my cell
Moon after moon slow waning, when a sleep,

That of the future burst the veil, in dream
Visited me. It was a slumber deep
And evil; for I saw, or I did seem

To see, *that* tyrant Lord his revels keep,
The leader of the cruel hunt to them,
Chasing the wolf and wolf-cubs up the steep

Ascent, that from *the Pisan is the screen*
Of *Lucca;* with him Gualandi came,
Sismondi, and Lanfranchi, *bloodhounds lean,*

Trained to the sport and eager for the game
Wide ranging in his front; but soon were seen
Though by so short a course, with *spirits tame,*

The father and *his whelps* to flag at once,
And then the sharp fangs gored their bosoms deep.
Ere morn I roused myself, and heard my sons,

For they were with me, moaning in their sleep,
And begging bread. Ah, for those darling ones!
Right cruel art thou, if thou dost not weep

46 Towards *1862*; Unto *1834*. 47 thee, to come *1862*; thee O come *1834*.

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[1] Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847, with Shelley's corrections in italics.—ED.

In thinking of my soul's sad augury;
And if thou weepest not now, weep never more!
They were already waked, as wont drew nigh

The allotted hour for food, and in that hour
Each drew a presage from his dream. When I
Heard locked beneath me of that horrible tower

The outlet; then into their eyes alone
I looked to read myself, without a sign
Or word. I wept not—turned within to stone.

They wept aloud, and little Anselm mine,
Said—'twas my youngest, dearest little one,—
'What ails thee, father? Why look so at thine?'

In all that day, and all the following night,
I wept not, nor replied; but when to shine
Upon the world, not us, came forth the light

Of the new sun, and thwart my prison thrown
Gleamed through its narrow chink, a doleful sight,
Three faces, each the reflex of my own,

Were imaged by its faint and ghastly ray;
Then I, of either hand unto the bone,
Gnawed, in my agony; and thinking they

'Twas done from sudden pangs, in their excess,
All of a sudden raise themselves, and say,
'Father! our woes, so great, were yet the less

Would you but eat of us,—'twas *you who clad*
Our bodies in these weeds of wretchedness;
Despoil them.' Not to make their hearts more sad,

I *hushed* myself. That day is at its close,—
Another—still we were all mute. Oh, had
The obdurate earth opened to end our woes!

The fourth day dawned, and when the new sun shone,
Outstretched himself before me as it rose
My Gaddo, saying, 'Help, father! hast thou none

For thine own child—is there no help from thee?'
He died—there at my feet—and one by one,
I saw them fall, plainly as you see me.

Between the fifth and sixth day, ere 'twas dawn,
I found *myself blind-groping o'er the three.*
Three days I called them after they were gone.

Famine of grief can get the mastery.

SONNET

FROM THE ITALIAN OF CAVALCANTI

Guido Cavalcanti to Dante Alighieri

[Published by Forman (who assigns it to 1815), *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

Returning from its daily quest, my Spirit
Changed thoughts and vile in thee doth weep to find:
It grieves me that thy mild and gentle mind
Those ample virtues which it did inherit
Has lost. Once thou didst loathe the multitude
Of blind and madding men—I then loved thee—
I loved thy lofty songs and that sweet mood
When thou wert faithful to thyself and me.
I dare not now through thy degraded state
Own the delight thy strains inspire—in vain
I seek what once thou wert—we cannot meet
And we were wont. Again and yet again
Ponder my words: so the false Spirit shall fly
And leave to thee thy true integrity.

SCENES FROM THE MAGICO PRODIGIOSO

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; dated March, 1822. There is a transcript of Scene I among the Hunt MSS., which has been collated by Mr. Buxton Forman.]

Scene I.—*Enter* Cyprian, *dressed as a Student;* Clarin *and* Moscon *as poor Scholars, with books.*

Cyprian. In the sweet solitude of this calm place,
This intricate wild wilderness of trees
And flowers and undergrowth of odorous plants,
Leave me; the books you brought out of the house
To me are ever best society.
And while with glorious festival and song,
Antioch now celebrates the consecration
Of a proud temple to great Jupiter,
And bears his image in loud jubilee
To its new shrine, I would consume what still
Lives of the dying day in studious thought,
Far from the throng and turmoil. You, my friends,
Go, and enjoy the festival; it will
Be worth your pains. You may return for me
When the sun seeks its grave among the billows
Which, among dim gray clouds on the horizon,
Dance like white plumes upon a hearse;—and here

Magico Prodigioso—14 *So transcr.*; Be worth the labour, and return for me *1824.* 16, 17 *So 1824*;

Hid among dim gray clouds on the horizon
Which dance like plumes—*transcr.*, *Forman.*

I shall expect you.
Moscon. I cannot bring my mind,
Great as my haste to see the festival
Certainly is, to leave you, Sir, without
Just saying some three or four thousand words.
How is it possible that on a day
Of such festivity, you can be content
To come forth to a solitary country
With three or four old books, and turn your back
On all this mirth?
Clarin. My master's in the right;
There is not anything more tiresome
Than a procession day, with troops, and priests,
And dances, and all that.
Moscon. From first to last,
Clarin, you are a temporizing flatterer;
You praise not what you feel but what he does;—
Toadeater!
Clarin. You lie—under a mistake—
For this is the most civil sort of lie
That can be given to a man's face. I now
Say what I think.
Cyprian. Enough, you foolish fellows!
Puffed up with your own doting ignorance,
You always take the two sides of one question.
Now go; and as I said, return for me
When night falls, veiling in its shadows wide
This glorious fabric of the universe.
Moscon. How happens it, although you can maintain
The folly of enjoying festivals,
That yet you go there?
Clarin. Nay, the consequence
Is clear:—who ever did what he advises
Others to do?—
Moscon. Would that my feet were wings,
So would I fly to Livia. [*Exit.*
Clarin. To speak truth,
Livia is she who has surprised my heart;
But he is more than half-way there.—Soho!
Livia, I come; good sport, Livia, soho! [*Exit.*
Cyprian. Now, since I am alone, let me examine
The question which has long disturbed my mind
With doubt, since first I read in Plinius
The words of mystic import and deep sense
In which he defines God. My intellect
Can find no God with whom these marks and signs
Fitly agree. It is a hidden truth

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21 thousand *transcr.*; hundred *1824.* 23 be content *transcr.*; bring your mind *1824.* 28 and priests *transcr.*; of men *1824* 36 doting ignorance *transcr.*; ignorance and pride *1824.*

Which I must fathom.
[CYPRIAN *reads; the* DAEMON, *dressed in a Court dress, enters.*
Daemon. Search even as thou wilt,
But thou shalt never find what I can hide.
Cyprian. What noise is that among the boughs? Who moves?
What art thou?—
Daemon. 'Tis a foreign gentleman.
Even from this morning I have lost my way
In this wild place; and my poor horse at last,
Quite overcome, has stretched himself upon
The enamelled tapestry of this mossy mountain,
And feeds and rests at the same time. I was
Upon my way to Antioch upon business
Of some importance, but wrapped up in cares
(Who is exempt from this inheritance?)
I parted from my company, and lost
My way, and lost my servants and my comrades.
Cyprian. 'Tis singular that even within the sight
Of the high towers of Antioch you could lose
Your way. Of all the avenues and green paths
Of this wild wood there is not one but leads,
As to its centre, to the walls of Antioch;
Take which you will, you cannot miss your road.
Daemon. And such is ignorance! Even in the sight
Of knowledge, it can draw no profit from it.
But as it still is early, and as I
Have no acquaintances in Antioch,
Being a stranger there, I will even wait
The few surviving hours of the day,
Until the night shall conquer it. I see
Both by your dress and by the books in which
You find delight and company, that you
Are a great student;—for my part, I feel
Much sympathy in such pursuits.
Cyprian. Have you
Studied much?
Daemon. No,—and yet I know enough
Not to be wholly ignorant.
Cyprian. Pray, Sir,
What science may you know?—
Daemon. Many.
Cyprian. Alas!
Much pains must we expend on one alone,
And even then attain it not;—but you
Have the presumption to assert that you
Know many without study.
Daemon. And with truth.
For in the country whence I come the sciences

57 *Stage Direction: So transcr.*; Reads. Enter the Devil as a fine gentleman *1824*. 87 in *transcr.*; with *1824*. 95 come the sciences] come sciences *1824*.

Require no learning,—they are known.
Cyprian. Oh, would
I were of that bright country! for in this
The more we study, we the more discover
Our ignorance.
Daemon. It is so true, that I
Had so much arrogance as to oppose
The chair of the most high Professorship,
And obtained many votes, and, though I lost,
The attempt was still more glorious, than the failure
Could be dishonourable. If you believe not,
Let us refer it to dispute respecting
That which you know the best, and although I
Know not the opinion you maintain, and though
It be the true one, I will take the contrary.
Cyprian. The offer gives me pleasure. I am now
Debating with myself upon a passage
Of Plinius, and my mind is racked with doubt
To understand and know who is the God
Of whom he speaks.
Daemon. It is a passage, if
I recollect it right, couched in these words:
'God is one supreme goodness, one pure essence,
One substance, and one sense, all sight, all hands.'
Cyprian. 'Tis true.
Daemon. What difficulty find you here?
Cyprian. I do not recognize among the Gods
The God defined by Plinius; if he must
Be supreme goodness, even Jupiter
Is not supremely good; because we see
His deeds are evil, and his attributes
Tainted with mortal weakness; in what manner
Can supreme goodness be consistent with
The passions of humanity?
Daemon. The wisdom
Of the old world masked with the names of Gods
The attributes of Nature and of Man;
A sort of popular philosophy.
Cyprian. This reply will not satisfy me, for
Such awe is due to the high name of God
That ill should never be imputed. Then,
Examining the question with more care,
It follows, that the Gods would always will
That which is best, were they supremely good.
How then does one will one thing, one another?
And that you may not say that I allege
Poetical or philosophic learning:—
Consider the ambiguous responses
Of their oracular statues; from two shrines
Two armies shall obtain the assurance of

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106 the *transcr.*; *wanting, 1824.* 133 would *transcr.*; should *1824.*

One victory. Is it not indisputable
That two contending wills can never lead
To the same end? And, being opposite,
If one be good, is not the other evil?
Evil in God is inconceivable;
But supreme goodness fails among the Gods
Without their union.
Daemon. I deny your major.
These responses are means towards some end
Unfathomed by our intellectual beam.
They are the work of Providence, and more
The battle's loss may profit those who lose,
Than victory advantage those who win.
Cyprian. That I admit; and yet that God should not
(Falsehood is incompatible with deity)
Assure the victory; it would be enough
To have permitted the defeat. If God
Be all sight,—God, who had beheld the truth,
Would not have given assurance of an end
Never to be accomplished: thus, although
The Deity may according to his attributes
Be well distinguished into persons, yet
Even in the minutest circumstance
His essence must be one.
Daemon. To attain the end
The affections of the actors in the scene
Must have been thus influenced by his voice.
Cyprian. But for a purpose thus subordinate
He might have employed Genii, good or evil,—
A sort of spirits called so by the learned,
Who roam about inspiring good or evil,
And from whose influence and existence we
May well infer our immortality.
Thus God might easily, without descent
To a gross falsehood in his proper person,
Have moved the affections by this mediation
To the just point.
Daemon. These trifling contradictions
Do not suffice to impugn the unity
Of the high Gods; in things of great importance
They still appear unanimous; consider
That glorious fabric, man,—his workmanship
Is stamped with one conception.
Cyprian. Who made man
Must have, methinks, the advantage of the others.
If they are equal, might they not have risen
In opposition to the work, and being
All hands, according to our author here,
Have still destroyed even as the other made?

157 had *transcr.*; *wanting, 1824.* 172 descent *transcr.*; descending *1824.*

If equal in their power, unequal only
In opportunity, which of the two
Will remain conqueror?
Daemon. On impossible
And false hypothesis there can be built
No argument. Say, what do you infer
From this?
Cyprian. That there must be a mighty God
Of supreme goodness and of highest grace,
All sight, all hands, all truth, infallible,
Without an equal and without a rival,
The cause of all things and the effect of nothing,
One power, one will, one substance, and one essence.
And, in whatever persons, one or two,
His attributes may be distinguished, one
Sovereign power, one solitary essence,
One cause of all cause. [*They rise.*
Daemon. How can I impugn
So clear a consequence?
Cyprian. Do you regret
My victory?
Daemon. Who but regrets a check
In rivalry of wit? I could reply
And urge new difficulties, but will now
Depart, for I hear steps of men approaching,
And it is time that I should now pursue
My journey to the city.
Cyprian. Go in peace!
Daemon. Remain in peace!—Since thus it profits him
To study, I will wrap his senses up
In sweet oblivion of all thought but of
A piece of excellent beauty; and, as I
Have power given me to wage enmity
Against Justina's soul, I will extract
From one effect two vengeances. [*Aside and exit.*
Cyprian. I never
Met a more learnèd person. Let me now
Revolve this doubt again with careful mind. [*He reads.*

FLORO *and* LELIO *enter.*

Lelio. Here stop. These toppling rocks and tangled boughs,
Impenetrable by the noonday beam,
Shall be sole witnesses of what we——
Floro. Draw!
If there were words, here is the place for deeds.
Lelio. Thou needest not instruct me; well I know
That in the field, the silent tongue of steel
Speaks thus,— [*They fight.*
Cyprian. Ha! what is this? Lelio,—Floro,

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186 unequal only *transcr.*; and only unequal *1824.* 197 And] *query,* Ay? 200 all cause *1824*; all things *transcr.* 214 *Stage direction*: *So transcr.*; Exit *1824.*

Be it enough that Cyprian stands between you,
Although unarmed.
Lelio. Whence comest thou, to stand
Between me and my vengeance?
Floro. From what rocks
And desert cells?

Enter MOSCON *and* CLARIN.

Moscon. Run! run! for where we left
My master, I now hear the clash of swords.
Clarin. I never run to approach things of this sort,
But only to avoid them. Sir! Cyprian! sir!
Cyprian. Be silent, fellows! What! two friends who are
In blood and fame the eyes and hope of Antioch,
One of the noble race of the Colalti,
The other son o' the Governor, adventure
And cast away, on some slight cause no doubt,
Two lives, the honour of their country?
Lelio. Cyprian!
Although my high respect towards your person
Holds now my sword suspended, thou canst not
Restore it to the slumber of the scabbard:
Thou knowest more of science than the duel;
For when two men of honour take the field,
No counsel nor respect can make them friends
But one must die in the dispute.
Floro. I pray
That you depart hence with your people, and
Leave us to finish what we have begun
Without advantage.—
Cyprian. Though you may imagine
That I know little of the laws of duel,
Which vanity and valour instituted,
You are in error. By my birth I am
Held no less than yourselves to know the limits
Of honour and of infamy, nor has study
Quenched the free spirit which first ordered them;
And thus to me, as one well experienced
In the false quicksands of the sea of honour,
You may refer the merits of the case;
And if I should perceive in your relation
That either has the right to satisfaction
From the other, I give you my word of honour
To leave you.
Lelio. Under this condition then
I will relate the cause, and you will cede
And must confess the impossibility

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228 I now hear *transcr.*; we hear *1824.* 227-9 *lines otherwise arranged, 1824.* 233 race *transcr.*; men *1824.* Colalti] Colatti *1824.* 239 of the *transcr.*; of its *1824.* 242 No counsel nor *1839, 1st ed.*; No [ ] or *1824*; No reasoning or *transcr.* 243 dispute *transcr.*; pursuit *1824.* 253 well *omit, cj. Forman.*

Of compromise; for the same lady is
Beloved by Floro and myself.
Floro. It seems
Much to me that the light of day should look
Upon that idol of my heart—but he——
Leave us to fight, according to thy word.
Cyprian. Permit one question further: is the lady
Impossible to hope or not?
Lelio. She is
So excellent, that if the light of day
Should excite Floro's jealousy, it were
Without just cause, for even the light of day
Trembles to gaze on her.
Cyprian. Would you for your
Part, marry her?
Floro. Such is my confidence.
Cyprian. And you?
Lelio. Oh! would that I could lift my hope
So high, for though she is extremely poor,
Her virtue is her dowry.
Cyprian. And if you both
Would marry her, is it not weak and vain,
Culpable and unworthy, thus beforehand
To slur her honour? What would the world say
If one should slay the other, and if she
Should afterwards espouse the murderer?

[*The rivals agree to refer their quarrel to* CYPRIAN; *who in consequence visits* JUSTINA, *and becomes enamoured of her; she disdains him, and he retires to a solitary sea-shore.*

SCENE II

Cyprian.

O memory! permit it not
That the tyrant of my thought
Be another soul that still
Holds dominion o'er the will,
That would refuse, but can no more,
To bend, to tremble, and adore.
Vain idolatry!—I saw,
And gazing, became blind with error;
Weak ambition, which the awe
Of her presence bound to terror!
So beautiful she was—and I,
Between my love and jealousy,
Am so convulsed with hope and fear,
Unworthy as it may appear;—
So bitter is the life I live,
That, hear me, Hell! I now would give
To thy most detested spirit
My soul, for ever to inherit,

To suffer punishment and pine,
So this woman may be mine.
Hear'st thou, Hell! dost thou reject it?
My soul is offered!
Daemon (*unseen*). I accept it.
[*Tempest, with thunder and lightning.*

Cyprian.

What is this? ye heavens for ever pure,
At once intensely radiant and obscure!
Athwart the aethereal halls
The lightning's arrow and the thunder-balls
The day affright,
As from the horizon round,
Burst with earthquake sound,
In mighty torrents the electric fountains;—
Clouds quench the sun, and thunder-smoke
Strangles the air, and fire eclipses Heaven.
Philosophy, thou canst not even
Compel their causes underneath thy yoke:
From yonder clouds even to the waves below
The fragments of a single ruin choke
Imagination's flight;
For, on flakes of surge, like feathers light,
The ashes of the desolation, cast
Upon the gloomy blast,
Tell of the footsteps of the storm;
And nearer, see, the melancholy form
Of a great ship, the outcast of the sea,
Drives miserably!
And it must fly the pity of the port,
Or perish, and its last and sole resort
Is its own raging enemy.
The terror of the thrilling cry
Was a fatal prophecy
Of coming death, who hovers now
Upon that shattered prow,
That they who die not may be dying still.
And not alone the insane elements
Are populous with wild portents,
But that sad ship is as a miracle
Of sudden ruin, for it drives so fast
It seems as if it had arrayed its form
With the headlong storm.
It strikes—I almost feel the shock,—
It stumbles on a jaggèd rock,—
Sparkles of blood on the white foam are cast.
[*A tempest.*

All exclaim (*within*). We are all lost!
Daemon (*within*). Now from this plank will I
Pass to the land and thus fulfil my scheme.

Cyprian.
As in contempt of the elemental rage
A man comes forth in safety, while the ship's
Great form is in a watery eclipse
Obliterated from the Ocean's page,
And round its wreck the huge sea-monsters sit,
A horrid conclave, and the whistling wave
Is heaped over its carcase, like a grave.

The Daemon *enters, as escaped from the sea.*

Daemon (*aside*). It was essential to my purposes
To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean,
That in this unknown form I might at length
Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture
Sustained upon the mountain, and assail
With a new war the soul of Cyprian,
Forging the instruments of his destruction
Even from his love and from his wisdom. – O
Belovèd earth, dear mother, in thy bosom
I seek a refuge from the monster who
Precipitates itself upon me.
Cyprian. Friend,
Collect thyself; and be the memory
Of thy late suffering, and thy greatest sorrow
But as a shadow of the past,—for nothing
Beneath the circle of the moon, but flows
And changes, and can never know repose.
Daemon. And who art thou, before whose feet my fate
Has prostrated me?
Cyprian. One who, moved with pity,
Would soothe its stings.
Daemon. Oh, that can never be!
No solace can my lasting sorrows find.
Cyprian. Wherefore?
Daemon. Because my happiness is lost.
Yet I lament what has long ceased to be
The object of desire or memory,
And my life is not life.
Cyprian. Now, since the fury
Of this earthquaking hurricane is still,
And the crystàlline Heaven has reassumed
Its windless calm so quickly, that it seems
As if its heavy wrath had been awakened
Only to overwhelm that vessel,—speak,
Who art thou, and whence comest thou?
Daemon. Far more
My coming hither cost, than thou hast seen
Or I can tell. Among my misadventures
This shipwreck is the least. Wilt thou hear?
Cyprian. Speak.
Daemon. Since thou desirest, I will then unveil

Myself to thee;—for in myself I am
A world of happiness and misery;
This I have lost, and that I must lament
Forever. In my attributes I stood
So high and so heroically great,
In lineage so supreme, and with a genius
Which penetrated with a glance the world
Beneath my feet, that, won by my high merit,
A king—whom I may call the King of kings,
Because all others tremble in their pride
Before the terrors of His countenance,
In His high palace roofed with brightest gems
Of living light—call them the stars of Heaven—
Named me His counsellor. But the high praise
Stung me with pride and envy, and I rose
In mighty competition, to ascend
His seat and place my foot triumphantly
Upon His subject thrones. Chastised, I know
The depth to which ambition falls; too mad
Was the attempt, and yet more mad were now
Repentance of the irrevocable deed:—
Therefore I chose this ruin, with the glory
Of not to be subdued, before the shame
Of reconciling me with Him who reigns
By coward cession.—Nor was I alone,
Nor am I now, nor shall I be alone;
And there was hope, and there may still be hope,
For many suffrages among His vassals
Hailed me their lord and king, and many still
Are mine, and many more, perchance shall be.
Thus vanquished, though in fact victorious,
I left His seat of empire, from mine eye
Shooting forth poisonous lightning, while my words
With inauspicious thunderings shook Heaven,
Proclaiming vengeance, public as my wrong,
And imprecating on His prostrate slaves
Rapine, and death, and outrage. Then I sailed
Over the mighty fabric of the world,—
A pirate ambushed in its pathless sands,
A lynx crouched watchfully among its caves
And craggy shores; and I have wandered over
The expanse of these wide wildernesses
In this great ship, whose bulk is now dissolved
In the light breathings of the invisible wind,
And which the sea has made a dustless ruin,
Seeking ever a mountain, through whose forests
I seek a man, whom I must now compel
To keep his word with me. I came arrayed
In tempest, and although my power could well

146 wide glassy wildernesses *Rossetti.* 150 Seeking forever *cj. Forman.*

Bridle the forest winds in their career,
For other causes I forbore to soothe
Their fury to Favonian gentleness;
I could and would not; (thus I wake in him [*Aside.*
A love of magic art). Let not this tempest,
Nor the succeeding calm excite thy wonder;
For by my art the sun would turn as pale
As his weak sister with unwonted fear;
And in my wisdom are the orbs of Heaven
Written as in a record; I have pierced
The flaming circles of their wondrous spheres
And know them as thou knowest every corner
Of this dim spot. Let it not seem to thee
That I boast vainly; wouldst thou that I work
A charm over this waste and savage wood,
This Babylon of crags and agèd trees,
Filling its leafy coverts with a horror
Thrilling and strange? I am the friendless guest
Of these wild oaks and pines—and as from thee
I have received the hospitality
Of this rude place, I offer thee the fruit
Of years of toil in recompense; whate'er
Thy wildest dream presented to thy thought
As object of desire, that shall be thine.

. . . .

And thenceforth shall so firm an amity
'Twixt thee and me be, that neither Fortune,
The monstrous phantom which pursues success,
That careful miser, that free prodigal,
Who ever alternates, with changeful hand,
Evil and good, reproach and fame; nor Time,
That lodestar of the ages, to whose beam
The wingèd years speed o'er the intervals
Of their unequal revolutions; nor
Heaven itself, whose beautiful bright stars
Rule and adorn the world, can ever make
The least division between thee and me,
Since now I find a refuge in thy favour.

SCENE III.—*The* DAEMON *tempts* JUSTINA, *who is a Christian.*

Daemon.

Abyss of Hell! I call on thee,
Thou wild misrule of thine own anarchy!
From thy prison-house set free
The spirits of voluptuous death,
That with their mighty breath
They may destroy a world of virgin thoughts;
Let her chaste mind with fancies thick as motes
Be peopled from thy shadowy deep,
Till her guiltless fantasy

154 forest] fiercest *cj. Rossetti.*

Full to overflowing be!
And with sweetest harmony,
Let birds, and flowers, and leaves, and all things move
To love, only to love.
Let nothing meet her eyes
But signs of Love's soft victories,
Let nothing meet her ear
But sounds of Love's sweet sorrow,
So that from faith no succour she may borrow,
But, guided by my spirit blind
And in a magic snare entwined,
She may now seek Cyprian.
Begin, while I in silence bind
My voice, when thy sweet song thou hast began.

A Voice (within).

What is the glory far above
All else in human life?

All.

Love! love!

[*While these words are sung, the* Daemon *goes out at one door, and* Justina *enters at another.*

The First Voice.

There is no form in which the fire
Of love its traces has impressed not.
Man lives far more in love's desire
Than by life's breath, soon possessed not.
If all that lives must love or die,
All shapes on earth, or sea, or sky,
With one consent to Heaven cry
That the glory far above
All else in life is—

All.

Love! oh, Love!

Justina.

Thou melancholy Thought which art
So flattering and so sweet, to thee
When did I give the liberty
Thus to afflict my heart?
What is the cause of this new Power
Which doth my fevered being move,
Momently raging more and more?
What subtle Pain is kindled now
Which from my heart doth overflow
Into my senses?—

All.

Love! oh, Love!

18 she may] may she *1824*. 36 flattering *Boscombe MS.*; fluttering *1824*.

Justina.

'Tis that enamoured Nightingale
Who gives me the reply;
He ever tells the same soft tale
Of passion and of constancy
To his mate, who rapt and fond,
Listening sits, a bough beyond.

Be silent, Nightingale—no more
Make me think, in hearing thee
Thus tenderly thy love deplore,
If a bird can feel his so,
What a man would feel for me.
And, voluptuous Vine, O thou
Who seekest most when least pursuing,—
To the trunk thou interlacest
Art the verdure which embracest,
And the weight which is its ruin,—
No more, with green embraces, Vine,
Make me think on what thou lovest,—
For whilst thus thy boughs entwine,
I fear lest thou shouldst teach me, sophist,
How arms might be entangled too.

Light-enchanted Sunflower, thou
Who gazest ever true and tender
On the sun's revolving splendour!
Follow not his faithless glance
With thy faded countenance,
Nor teach my beating heart to fear,
If leaves can mourn without a tear,
How eyes must weep! O Nightingale,
Cease from thy enamoured tale,—
Leafy Vine, unwreathe thy bower,
Restless Sunflower, cease to move,—
Or tell me all, what poisonous Power
Ye use against me—

All.

Love! Love! Love!

Justina. It cannot be!—Whom have I ever loved?
Trophies of my oblivion and disdain,
Floro and Lelio did I not reject?
And Cyprian?— [*She becomes troubled at the name of Cyprian.*
Did I not requite him
With such severity, that he has fled
Where none has ever heard of him again?—
Alas! I now begin to fear that this
May be the occasion whence desire grows bold,
As if there were no danger. From the moment

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58 To] Who to *cj. Rossetti.* 63 whilst thus *Rossetti, Forma Dowden*; whilst thou thus *1824.*

That I pronounced to my own listening heart,
'Cyprian is absent!'—O me miserable!
I know not what I feel! [*More calmly.*] It must be pity
To think that such a man, whom all the world
Admired, should be forgot by all the world,
And I the cause. [*She again becomes troubled.*
And yet if it were pity,
Floro and Lelio might have equal share,
For they are both imprisoned for my sake.
(*Calmly.*) Alas! what reasonings are these? it is
Enough I pity him, and that, in vain,
Without this ceremonious subtlety.
And, woe is me! I know not where to find him now,
Even should I seek him through this wide world.

Enter DAEMON.

Daemon. Follow, and I will lead thee where he is.
Justina. And who art thou, who hast found entrance hither,
Into my chamber through the doors and locks?
Art thou a monstrous shadow which my madness
Has formed in the idle air?
Daemon. No. I am one
Called by the Thought which tyrannizes thee
From his eternal dwelling; who this day
Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.
Justina. So shall thy promise fail. This agony
Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul
May sweep imagination in its storm;
The will is firm.
Daemon. Already half is done
In the imagination of an act.
The sin incurred, the pleasure then remains;
Let not the will stop half-way on the road.
Justina. I will not be discouraged, nor despair,
Although I thought it, and although 'tis true
That thought is but a prelude to the deed:—
Thought is not in my power, but action is:
I will not move my foot to follow thee.
Daemon. But a far mightier wisdom than thine own
Exerts itself within thee, with such power
Compelling thee to that which it inclines
That it shall force thy step; how wilt thou then
Resist, Justina?
Justina. By my free-will.
Daemon. I
Must force thy will.
Justina. It is invincible;
It were not free if thou hadst power upon it.
[*He draws, but cannot move her.*

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89 me miserable] miserable me *edd. 1839.* 123 inclines] inclines to *cj. Rossetti.*

Daemon. Come, where a pleasure waits thee.
Justina. It were bought
Too dear.
Daemon. 'Twill soothe thy heart to softest peace.
Justina. 'Tis dread captivity.
Daemon. 'Tis joy, 'tis glory.
Justina. 'Tis shame, 'tis torment, 'tis despair.
Daemon. But how
Canst thou defend thyself from that or me,
If my power drags thee onward?
Justina. My defence
Consists in God.
[*He vainly endeavours to force her, and at last releases her.*
Daemon. Woman, thou hast subdued me,
Only by not owning thyself subdued.
But since thou thus findest defence in God,
I will assume a feignèd form, and thus
Make thee a victim of my baffled rage.
For I will mask a spirit in thy form
Who will betray thy name to infamy,
And doubly shall I triumph in thy loss,
First by dishonouring thee, and then by turning
False pleasure to true ignominy. [*Exit.*
Justina. I
Appeal to Heaven against thee; so that Heaven
May scatter thy delusions, and the blot
Upon my fame vanish in idle thought,
Even as flame dies in the envious air,
And as the floweret wanes at morning frost;
And thou shouldst never – But, alas! to whom
Do I still speak?—Did not a man but now
Stand here before me?—No, I am alone,
And yet I saw him. Is he gone so quickly?
Or can the heated mind engender shapes
From its own fear? Some terrible and strange
Peril is near. Lisander! father! lord!
Livia!—

Enter LISANDER *and* LIVIA.

Lisander. Oh, my daughter! What?
Livia. What!
Justina. Saw you
A man go forth from my apartment now?—
I scarce contain myself!
Lisander. A man here!
Justina. Have you not seen him?
Livia. No, Lady.
Justina. I saw him.
Lisander. 'Tis impossible; the doors
Which led to this apartment were all locked.
Livia (*aside*). I daresay it was Moscon whom she saw.

For he was locked up in my room.
Lisander. It must
Have been some image of thy fantasy.
Such melancholy as thou feedest is
Skilful in forming such in the vain air
Out of the motes and atoms of the day.
Livia. My master 's in the right.
Justina. Oh, would it were
Delusion; but I fear some greater ill.
I feel as if out of my bleeding bosom
My heart was torn in fragments; ay,
Some mortal spell is wrought against my frame;
So potent was the charm that, had not God
Shielded my humble innocence from wrong,
I should have sought my sorrow and my shame
With willing steps.—Livia, quick, bring my cloak,
For I must seek refuge from these extremes
Even in the temple of the highest God
Where secretly the faithful worship.
Livia. Here.
Justina (*putting on her cloak*). In this, as in a shroud of snow, may I
Quench the consuming fire in which I burn,
Wasting away!
Lisander. And I will go with thee.
Livia. When I once see them safe out of the house
I shall breathe freely.
Justina. So do I confide
In thy just favour, Heaven!
Lisander. Let us go.
Justina. Thine is the cause, great God! turn for my sake,
And for Thine own, mercifully to me!

STANZAS FROM CALDERON'S CISMA DE INGLATERRA

Translated by Medwin and corrected by Shelley.

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847, with Shelley's corrections in italics.]

I

Hast thou not seen, officious with delight,
Move through the illumined air about the flower
The Bee, that fears to drink its purple light,
Lest danger lurk within that Rose's bower?
Hast thou not marked the moth's enamoured flight
About the Taper's flame at evening hour,
Till kindle in that monumental fire
His sunflower wings their own funereal pyre?

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179 Where *Rossetti*; Which *1824*.

II

My heart, its wishes trembling to unfold,
  Thus round the Rose and Taper hovering came,
And Passion's slave, Distrust, in ashes cold,
  Smothered awhile, but could not quench the flame,—
Till Love, that grows by disappointment bold,
  And Opportunity, had conquered Shame;
And like the Bee and Moth, in act to close,
I burned my wings, and settled on the Rose.

SCENES FROM THE FAUST OF GOETHE

[Published in part (Scene II) in *The Liberal*, No. 1, 1822; in full, by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

SCENE I.—PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN. *The* LORD *and the* HOST *of* HEAVEN.

Enter three ARCHANGELS.

Raphael.

THE sun makes music as of old
  Amid the rival spheres of Heaven,
On its predestined circle rolled
  With thunder speed: the Angels even
Draw strength from gazing on its glance,
  Though none its meaning fathom may:—
The world's unwithered countenance
  Is bright as at Creation's day.

Gabriel.

And swift and swift, with rapid lightness,
  The adornèd Earth spins silently,
Alternating Elysian brightness
  With deep and dreadful night; the sea
Foams in broad billows from the deep
  Up to the rocks, and rocks and Ocean,
Onward, with spheres which never sleep,
  Are hurried in eternal motion.

Michael.

And tempests in contention roar
  From land to sea, from sea to land;
And, raging, weave a chain of power,
  Which girds the earth, as with a band.—
A flashing desolation there,
  Flames before the thunder's way;
But Thy servants, Lord, revere
  The gentle changes of Thy day.

Chorus of the Three.

The Angels draw strength from Thy glance,
Though no one comprehend Thee may;—
Thy world's unwithered countenance
Is bright as on Creation's day[1].

Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mephistopheles. As thou, O Lord, once more art kind enough
To interest Thyself in our affairs,
And ask, 'How goes it with you there below?'
And as indulgently at other times
Thou tookest not my visits in ill part,
Thou seest me here once more among Thy household.
Though I should scandalize this company,
You will excuse me if I do not talk
In the high style which they think fashionable;
My pathos certainly would make You laugh too,
Had You not long since given over laughing.

38 certainly would *edd. 1839*; would certainly *1824*.

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[1] *Raphael.* The sun sounds, according to ancient custom,
In the song of emulation of his brother-spheres.
And its fore-written circle
Fulfils with a step of thunder.
Its countenance gives the Angels strength
Though no one can fathom it.
The incredible high works
Are excellent as at the first day.
Gabriel. And swift, and inconceivably swift
The adornment of earth winds itself round,
And exchanges Paradise-clearness
With deep dreadful night.
The sea foams in broad waves
From its deep bottom, up to the rocks,
And rocks and sea are torn on together
In the eternal swift course of the spheres.
Michael. And storms roar in emulation
From sea to land, from land to sea,
And make, raging, a chain
Of deepest operation round about.
There flames a flashing destruction
Before the path of the thunderbolt.
But Thy servants, Lord, revere
The gentle alternations of Thy day.
Chorus. Thy countenance gives the Angels strength,
Though none can comprehend Thee:
And all Thy lofty works
Are excellent as at the first day.

Such is a literal translation of this astonishing chorus; it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification; even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a *caput mortuum.*—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Nothing know I to say of suns and worlds;
I observe only how men plague themselves;—
The little god o' the world keeps the same stamp,
As wonderful as on creation's day:—
A little better would he live, hadst Thou
Not given him a glimpse of Heaven's light
Which he calls reason, and employs it only
To live more beastlily than any beast.
With reverence to Your Lordship be it spoken,
He's like one of those long-legged grasshoppers,
Who flits and jumps about, and sings for ever
The same old song i' the grass. There let him lie,
Burying his nose in every heap of dung.
The Lord. Have you no more to say? Do you come here
Always to scold, and cavil, and complain?
Seems nothing ever right to you on earth?
Mephistopheles. No, Lord! I find all there, as ever, bad at best.
Even I am sorry for man's days of sorrow;
I could myself almost give up the pleasure
Of plaguing the poor things.
The Lord. Knowest thou Faust?
Mephistopheles. The Doctor?
The Lord. Ay; My servant Faust.
Mephistopheles. In truth
He serves You in a fashion quite his own;
And the fool's meat and drink are not of earth.
His aspirations bear him on so far
That he is half aware of his own folly,
For he demands from Heaven its fairest star,
And from the earth the highest joy it bears,
Yet all things far, and all things near, are vain
To calm the deep emotions of his breast.
The Lord. Though he now serves Me in a cloud of error,
I will soon lead him forth to the clear day.
When trees look green, full well the gardener knows
That fruits and blooms will deck the coming year.
Mephistopheles. What will You bet?—now I am sure of winning—
Only, observe You give me full permission
To lead him softly on my path.
The Lord. As long
As he shall live upon the earth, so long
Is nothing unto thee forbidden—Man
Must err till he has ceased to struggle.
Mephistopheles. Thanks.
And that is all I ask; for willingly
I never make acquaintance with the dead.
The full fresh cheeks of youth are food for me,
And if a corpse knocks, I am not at home.

47 beastlily *1824*; beastily *edd. 1839.*

For I am like a cat—I like to play
A little with the mouse before I eat it.
The Lord. Well, well! it is permitted thee. Draw thou
His spirit from its springs; as thou find'st power,
Seize him and lead him on thy downward path;
And stand ashamed when failure teaches thee
That a good man, even in his darkest longings,
Is well aware of the right way.
Mephistopheles. Well and good.
I am not in much doubt about my bet,
And if I lose, then 'tis Your turn to crow;
Enjoy Your triumph then with a full breast.
Ay; dust shall he devour, and that with pleasure,
Like my old paramour, the famous Snake.
The Lord. Pray come here when it suits you; for I never
Had much dislike for people of your sort.
And, among all the Spirits who rebelled,
The knave was ever the least tedious to Me.
The active spirit of man soon sleeps, and soon
He seeks unbroken quiet; therefore I
Have given him the Devil for a companion,
Who may provoke him to some sort of work,
And must create forever.—But ye, pure
Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty;—
Let that which ever operates and lives
Clasp you within the limits of its love;
And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts
The floating phantoms of its loveliness.
[Heaven closes; the Archangels exeunt.
Mephistopheles. From time to time I visit the old fellow,
And I take care to keep on good terms with Him.
Civil enough is the same God Almighty,
To talk so freely with the Devil himself.

Scene II.—May-day Night. *The Hartz Mountain, a desolate Country.* Faust, Mephistopheles.

Mephistopheles. Would you not like a broomstick? As for me
I wish I had a good stout ram to ride;
For we are still far from the appointed place.
Faust. This knotted staff is help enough for me,
Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good
Is there in making short a pleasant way?
To creep along the labyrinths of the vales,
And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs,
Precipitate themselves in waterfalls,
Is the true sport that seasons such a path.
Already Spring kindles the birchen spray,
And the hoar pines already feel her breath:
Shall she not work also within our limbs?
Mephistopheles. Nothing of such an influence do I feel.
My body is all wintry, and I wish

The flowers upon our path were frost and snow.
But see how melancholy rises now,
Dimly uplifting her belated beam,
The blank unwelcome round of the red moon,
And gives so bad a light, that every step
One stumbles 'gainst some crag. With your permission,
I'll call on Ignis-fatuus to our aid:
I see one yonder burning jollily.
Halloo, my friend! may I request that you
Would favour us with your bright company?
Why should you blaze away there to no purpose?
Pray be so good as light us up this way.
Ignis-fatuus. With reverence be it spoken, I will try
To overcome the lightness of my nature;
Our course, you know, is generally zigzag.
Mephistopheles. Ha, ha! your worship thinks you have to deal
With men. Go straight on, in the Devil's name,
Or I shall puff your flickering life out.
Ignis-fatuus. Well,
I see you are the master of the house;
I will accommodate myself to you.
Only consider that to-night this mountain
Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-lantern
Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,
You ought not to be too exact with him.

Faust, Mephistopheles, *and* Ignis-fatuus, *in alternate Chorus.*

The limits of the sphere of dream,
The bounds of true and false, are past.
Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam,
Lead us onward, far and fast,
To the wide, the desert waste.

But see, how swift advance and shift
Trees behind trees, row by row,—
How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift
Their frowning foreheads as we go.
The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!
How they snort, and how they blow!

Through the mossy sods and stones,
Stream and streamlet hurry down—
A rushing throng! A sound of song
Beneath the vault of Heaven is blown!
Sweet notes of love, the speaking tones
Of this bright day, sent down to say
That Paradise on Earth is known,
Resound around, beneath, above.
All we hope and all we love
Finds a voice in this blithe strain,
Which wakens hill and wood and rill,

---

33 shall puff *1824*; will blow *1822*. 48 frowning] fawning *1822*.

And vibrates far o'er field and vale,
And which Echo, like the tale
Of old times, repeats again.

To-whoo! to-whoo! near, nearer now
The sound of song, the rushing throng!
Are the screech, the lapwing, and the jay,
All awake as if 'twere day?
See, with long legs and belly wide,
A salamander in the brake!
Every root is like a snake,
And along the loose hillside,
With strange contortions through the night,
Curls, to seize or to affright;
And, animated, strong, and many,
They dart forth polypus-antennae,
To blister with their poison spume
The wanderer. Through the dazzling gloom
The many-coloured mice, that thread
The dewy turf beneath our tread,
In troops each other's motions cross,
Through the heath and through the moss;
And, in legions intertangled,
The fire-flies flit, and swarm, and throng,
Till all the mountain depths are spangled.

Tell me, shall we go or stay?
Shall we onward? Come along!
Everything around is swept
Forward, onward, far away!
Trees and masses intercept
The sight, and wisps on every side
Are puffed up and multiplied.

Mephistopheles. Now vigorously seize my skirt, and gain
This pinnacle of isolated crag.
One may observe with wonder from this point,
How Mammon glows among the mountains.
Faust. Ay—
And strangely through the solid depth below
A melancholy light, like the red dawn,
Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss
Of mountains, lightning hitherward: there rise
Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by;
Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air,
Or the illumined dust of golden flowers;
And now it glides like tender colours spreading;
And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth;
And now it winds, one torrent of broad light,
Through the far valley with a hundred veins;

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70 brake *1824*; lake *1822*.

And now once more within that narrow corner
Masses itself into intensest splendour.
And near us, see, sparks spring out of the ground,
Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness;
The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains
That hems us in are kindled.
Mephistopheles. Rare: in faith!
Does not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate
His palace for this festival?—it is
A pleasure which you had not known before.
I spy the boisterous guests already.
Faust. How
The children of the wind rage in the air!
With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck!

Mephistopheles.

Cling tightly to the old ribs of the crag.
Beware! for if with them thou warrest
In their fierce flight towards the wilderness,
Their breath will sweep thee into dust, and drag
Thy body to a grave in the abyss.
A cloud thickens the night.
Hark! how the tempest crashes through the forest!
The owls fly out in strange affright;
The columns of the evergreen palaces
Are split and shattered;
The roots creak, and stretch, and groan;
And ruinously overthrown,
The trunks are crushed and shattered
By the fierce blast's unconquerable stress.
Over each other crack and crash they all
In terrible and intertangled fall;
And through the ruins of the shaken mountain
The airs hiss and howl—
It is not the voice of the fountain,
Nor the wolf in his midnight prowl.
Dost thou not hear?
Strange accents are ringing
Aloft, afar, anear?
The witches are singing!
The torrent of a raging wizard song
Streams the whole mountain along.

Chorus of Witches.

The stubble is yellow, the corn is green,
Now to the Brocken the witches go;
The mighty multitude here may be seen
Gathering, wizard and witch, below.
Sir Urian is sitting aloft in the air;

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117 How *1824*; Now *1822*. 132 shattered] scattered *Rossetti*.
150 Urian] Urean *edd. 1824, 1839*.

Hey over stock! and hey over stone!
'Twixt witches and incubi, what shall be done?
Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

A Voice.

Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine,
Old Baubo rideth alone.

Chorus.

Honour her, to whom honour is due,
Old mother Baubo, honour to you!
An able sow, with old Baubo upon her,
Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour!
The legion of witches is coming behind,
Darkening the night, and outspeeding the wind—

A Voice.

Which way comest thou?

A Voice.

Over Ilsenstein;
The owl was awake in the white moonshine;
I saw her at rest in her downy nest,
And she stared at me with her broad, bright eyne.

Voices.

And you may now as well take your course on to Hell,
Since you ride by so fast on the headlong blast.

A Voice.

She dropped poison upon me as I passed.
Here are the wounds——

Chorus of Witches.

Come away! come along!
The way is wide, the way is long,
But what is that for a Bedlam throng?
Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom.
The child in the cradle lies strangled at home,
And the mother is clapping her hands.—

Semichorus of Wizards I.

We glide in
Like snails when the women are all away;
And from a house once given over to sin
Woman has a thousand steps to stray.

Semichorus II.

A thousand steps must a woman take,
Where a man but a single spring will make.

Voices above.

Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee.

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65 eyne *1839, 2nd ed.*; eye *1822, 1824, 1839, 1st ed.* 180 Felsensee *1862* (*Relics of Shelley, p.* 96); Felumee *1822*; Felunsee *edd. 1824, 1839.*

Voices below.

With what joy would we fly through the upper sky!
We are washed, we are 'nointed, stark naked are we;
But our toil and our pain are forever in vain.

Both Choruses.

The wind is still, the stars are fled,
The melancholy moon is dead;
The magic notes, like spark on spark,
Drizzle, whistling through the dark.
Come away!

Voices below.

Stay, Oh, stay!

Voices above.

Out of the crannies of the rocks
Who calls?

Voices below.

Oh, let me join your flocks!
I, three hundred years have striven
To catch your skirt and mount to Heaven,—
And still in vain. Oh, might I be
With company akin to me!

Both Choruses.

Some on a ram and some on a prong,
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along;
Forlorn is the wight who can rise not to-night.

A Half-Witch below.

I have been tripping this many an hour:
Are the others already so far before?
No quiet at home, and no peace abroad!
And less methinks is found by the road.

Chorus of Witches.

Come onward, away! aroint thee, aroint!
A witch to be strong must anoint—anoint—
Then every trough will be boat enough;
With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky,
Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

Both Choruses.

We cling to the skirt, and we strike on the ground;
Witch-legions thicken around and around;
Wizard-swarms cover the heath all over. [*They descend.*

Mephistopheles.

What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling;
What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling;
What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning,
As Heaven and Earth were overturning.

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183 are *edd. 1839*; is *1822 1824*.

There is a true witch element about us;
Take hold on me, or we shall be divided:—
Where are you?
Faust (*from a distance*). Here!
Mephistopheles. What!
I must exert my authority in the house.
Place for young Voland! pray make way, good people.
Take hold on me, doctor, and with one step
Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd:
They are too mad for people of my sort.
Just there shines a peculiar kind of light—
Something attracts me in those bushes. Come
This way: we shall slip down there in a minute.
Faust. Spirit of Contradiction! Well, lead on—
'Twere a wise feat indeed to wander out
Into the Brocken upon May-day night,
And then to isolate oneself in scorn,
Disgusted with the humours of the time.
Mephistopheles. See yonder, round a many-coloured flame
A merry club is huddled altogether:
Even with such little people as sit there
One would not be alone.
Faust. Would that I were
Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke,
Where the blind million rush impetuously
To meet the evil ones; there might I solve
Many a riddle that torments me!
Mephistopheles. Yet
Many a riddle there is tied anew
Inextricably. Let the great world rage!
We will stay here safe in the quiet dwellings.
'Tis an old custom. Men have ever built
Their own small world in the great world of all.
I see young witches naked there, and old ones
Wisely attired with greater decency.
Be guided now by me, and you shall buy
A pound of pleasure with a dram of trouble.
I hear them tune their instruments—one must
Get used to this damned scraping. Come, I'll lead you
Among them; and what there you do and see,
As a fresh compact 'twixt us two shall be.
How say you now? this space is wide enough—
Look forth, you cannot see the end of it—
An hundred bonfires burn in rows, and they
Who throng around them seem innumerable:
Dancing and drinking, jabbering, making love,
And cooking, are at work. Now tell me, friend,
What is there better in the world than this?
Faust. In introducing us, do you assume
The character of Wizard or of Devil?

217 What! *wanting, 1822.* 254 An *1824*; A *edd. 1839.*

Mephistopheles. In truth, I generally go about
In strict incognito; and yet one likes
To wear one's orders upon gala days.
I have no ribbon at my knee; but here
At home, the cloven foot is honourable.
See you that snail there?—she comes creeping up,
And with her feeling eyes hath smelt out something.
I could not, if I would, mask myself here.
Come now, we'll go about from fire to fire:
I'll be the Pimp, and you shall be the Lover.
[*To some old Women, who are sitting round a heap of glimmering coals.*
Old gentlewomen, what do you do out here?
You ought to be with the young rioters
Right in the thickest of the revelry—
But every one is best content at home.

General.

Who dare confide in right or a just claim?
So much as I had done for them! and now—
With women and the people 'tis the same,
Youth will stand foremost ever,—age may go
To the dark grave unhonoured.

Minister.

Nowadays
People assert their rights: they go too far;
But as for me, the good old times I praise;
Then we were all in all—'twas something worth
One's while to be in place and wear a star;
That was indeed the golden age on earth.

Parvenu.

We too are active, and we did and do
What we ought not, perhaps; and yet we now
Will seize, whilst all things are whirled round and round,
A spoke of Fortune's wheel, and keep our ground.

Author.

Who now can taste a treatise of deep sense
And ponderous volume? 'tis impertinence
To write what none will read, therefore will I
To please the young and thoughtless people try.
Mephistopheles (*who at once appears to have grown very old*). I find the people ripe for the last day,
Since I last came up to the wizard mountain;
And as my little cask runs turbid now,
So is the world drained to the dregs.
Pedlar-witch. Look here,
Gentlemen; do not hurry on so fast;
And lose the chance of a good pennyworth.

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264 my *wanting*, *1822*. 275 right *edd. 1824, 1839*; night *1822*. 285 Parvenu: (Note) A sort of fundholder *1822, edd. 1824, 1839*. 290 ponderous *1824*; wonderous *1822*.

I have a pack full of the choicest wares
Of every sort, and yet in all my bundle
Is nothing like what may be found on earth;
Nothing that in a moment will make rich
Men and the world with fine malicious mischief—
There is no dagger drunk with blood; no bowl
From which consuming poison may be drained
By innocent and healthy lips; no jewel,
The price of an abandoned maiden's shame;
No sword which cuts the bond it cannot loose,
Or stabs the wearer's enemy in the back;
No——

Mephistopheles. Gossip, you know little of these times.
What has been, has been; what is done, is past,
They shape themselves into the innovations
They breed, and innovation drags us with it.
The torrent of the crowd sweeps over us:
You think to impel, and are yourself impelled.

Faust. What is that yonder?

Mephistopheles. Mark her well. It is
Lilith.

Faust. Who?

Mephistopheles. Lilith, the first wife of Adam.
Beware of her fair hair, for she excels
All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man's neck,
She will not ever set him free again.

Faust.

There sit a girl and an old woman—they
Seem to be tired with pleasure and with play.

Mephistopheles.

There is no rest to-night for any one:
When one dance ends another is begun;
Come, let us to it. We shall have rare fun.

[FAUST *dances and sings with a girl, and* MEPHISTOPHELES *with an old Woman.*

Faust.

I had once a lovely dream
In which I saw an apple-tree,
Where two fair apples with their gleam
To climb and taste attracted me.

The Girl.

She with apples you desired
From Paradise came long ago:
With you I feel that if required,
Such still within my garden grow.

. . . . .

327-334 *So Boscombe MS.* (*Westminster Review, July, 1870*); *wanting, 1822, 1824, 1839.*

Procto-Phantasmist. What is this cursèd multitude about?
Have we not long since proved to demonstration
That ghosts move not on ordinary feet?
But these are dancing just like men and women.
The Girl. What does he want then at our ball?
Faust. Oh! he
Is far above us all in his conceit:
Whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment;
And any step which in our dance we tread,
If it be left out of his reckoning,
Is not to be considered as a step.
There are few things that scandalize him not:
And when you whirl round in the circle now,
As he went round the wheel in his old mill,
He says that you go wrong in all respects,
Especially if you congratulate him
Upon the strength of the resemblance.
Procto-Phantasmist. Fly!
Vanish! Unheard-of impudence! What, still there!
In this enlightened age too, since you have been
Proved not to exist!—But this infernal brood
Will hear no reason and endure no rule.
Are we so wise, and is the *pond* still haunted?
How long have I been sweeping out this rubbish
Of superstition, and the world will not
Come clean with all my pains!—it is a case
Unheard of!
The Girl. Then leave off teasing us so.
Procto-Phantasmist. I tell you, spirits, to your faces now,
That I should not regret this despotism
Of spirits, but that mine can wield it not.
To-night I shall make poor work of it,
Yet I will take a round with you, and hope
Before my last step in the living dance
To beat the poet and the devil together.
Mephistopheles. At last he will sit down in some foul puddle;
That is his way of solacing himself;
Until some leech, diverted with his gravity,
Cures him of spirits and the spirit together.
[*To* Faust, *who has seceded from the dance.*
Why do you let that fair girl pass from you,
Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?
Faust. A red mouse in the middle of her singing
Sprung from her mouth.
Mephistopheles. That was all right, my friend:
Be it enough that the mouse was not gray.
Do not disturb your hour of happiness
With close consideration of such trifles.

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335 Procto-Phantasmist] Brocto-Phantasmist *edd. 1824, 1839.* 355 pond *wanting in Boscombe MS.*

Faust. Then saw I——
Mephistopheles. What?
Faust. Seest thou not a pale,
Fair girl, standing alone, far, far away?
She drags herself now forward with slow steps,
And seems as if she moved with shackled feet:
I cannot overcome the thought that she
Is like poor Margaret.
Mephistopheles. Let it be—pass on—
No good can come of it—it is not well
To meet it—it is an enchanted phantom,
A lifeless idol; with its numbing look,
It freezes up the blood of man; and they
Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to stone,
Like those who saw Medusa.
Faust. Oh, too true!
Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse
Which no belovèd hand has closed, alas!
That is the breast which Margaret yielded to me—
Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoyed!
Mephistopheles. It is all magic, poor deluded fool!
She looks to every one like his first love.
Faust. Oh, what delight! what woe! I cannot turn
My looks from her sweet piteous countenance.
How strangely does a single blood-red line,
Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife,
Adorn her lovely neck!
Mephistopheles. Ay, she can carry
Her head under her arm upon occasion;
Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures
End in delusion.—Gain this rising ground,
It is as airy here as in a . . .
And if I am not mightily deceived,
I see a theatre.—What may this mean?
Attendant. Quite a new piece, the last of seven, for tis
The custom now to represent that number.
'Tis written by a Dilettante, and
The actors who perform are Dilettanti;
Excuse me, gentlemen; but I must vanish.
I am a Dilettante curtain-lifter.

392 breast *edd. 1839*; heart *1822, 1824*.

JUVENILIA

QUEEN MAB

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM, WITH NOTES

[An edition (250 copies) of *Queen Mab* was printed at London in the summe of 1813 by Shelley himself, whose name, as author and printer, appears o the title-page (see *Bibliographical List*). Of this edition about sevent copies were privately distributed. Sections i, ii, viii, and ix were afterwards rehandled, and the intermediate sections here and there revised an altered; and of this new text sections i and ii were published by Shelle in the *Alastor* volume of 1816, under the title, *The Daemon of the Worl* The remainder lay unpublished till 1876, when sections viii and ix were printe by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., from a printed copy of *Queen Mab* wit Shelley's MS. corrections. See *The Shelley Library*, pp. 36–44, for a descriptio of this copy, which is in Mr. Forman's possession. Sources of the text ar (1) the *editio princeps* of 1813; (2) text (with some omissions) in the *Poetica Works* of 1839, edited by Mrs. Shelley; (3) text (one line only wanting) i the 2nd edition of the *P. W.*, 1839 (same editor).

Queen Mab was probably written during the year 1812—it is first heard o at Lynmouth, August 18, 1812 (*Shelley Memorials*, p. 39)—but the text ma be assumed to include earlier material.]

ECRASEZ L'INFAME!—*Correspondance de Voltaire.*

Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fonteis;
Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores.

. . . . . .

Unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae.
Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis
Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.—*Lucret.* lib. iv.

Δος που στῶ, καὶ κοσμον κινησω.—*Archimedes.*

TO HARRIET * * * * *

WHOSE is the love that gleaming through the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
Whose is the warm and partial praise,
Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?

HARRIET! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind;
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledg of love;
And know, though time may chang and years may roll,
Each floweret gathered in my heart
It consecrates to thine.

QUEEN MAB

I

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!
One, pale as yonder waning moon
With lips of lurid blue;

The other, rosy as the morn
When throned on ocean's wave
It blushes o'er the world:
Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres
Seized on her sinless soul?
Must then that peerless form
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline, which is fair
As breathing marble, perish?
Must putrefaction's breath
Leave nothing of this heavenly sight
But loathsomeness and ruin?
Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,
On which the lightest heart might moralize?
Or is it only a sweet slumber
Stealing o'er sensation,
Which the breath of roseate morning
Chaseth into darkness?
Will Ianthe wake again,
And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture from her smile?

Yes! she will wake again,
Although her glowing limbs are motionless,
And silent those sweet lips,
Once breathing eloquence,
That might have soothed a tiger's rage,
Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror.
Her dewy eyes are closed,
And on their lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,
The baby Sleep is pillowed:
Her golden tresses shade
The bosom's stainless pride,
Curling like tendrils of the parasite
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
'Tis like the wondrous strain
That round a lonely ruin swells,
Which, wandering on the echoing shore,
The enthusiast hears at evening:
'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh;
'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
Of that strange lyre whose strings
The genii of the breezes sweep:
Those lines of rainbow light
Are like the moonbeams when they fall
Through some cathedral window, but the tints
Are such as may not find
Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!
Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air;
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
And stop obedient to the reins of light:
These the Queen of Spells drew in,
She spread a charm around the spot,
And leaning graceful from the aethereal car,
Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid.

Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams,
When silvery clouds float through the 'wildered brain,
When every sight of lovely, wild and grand
Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
When fancy at a glance combines
The wondrous and the beautiful,—
So bright, so fair, so wild a shape
Hath ever yet beheld,
As that which reined the coursers of the air,
And poured the magic of her gaze
Upon the maiden's sleep.

The broad and yellow moon
Shone dimly through her form—

That form of faultless symmetry;
The pearly and pellucid car
Moved not the moonlight's line:
'Twas not an earthly pageant:
Those who had looked upon the sight,
Passing all human glory,
Saw not the yellow moon,
Saw not the mortal scene,
Heard not the night-wind's rush,
Heard not an earthly sound,
Saw but the fairy pageant,
Heard but the heavenly strains
That filled the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy's frame was slight, yon fibrous cloud,
That catches but the palest tinge of even,
And which the straining eye can hardly seize
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,
Spread a purpureal halo round the scene,
Yet with an undulating motion,
Swayed to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car
The Fairy Queen descended,
And thrice she waved her wand
Circled with wreaths of amaranth:
Her thin and misty form
Moved with the moving air,
And the clear silver tones,
As thus she spoke, were such
As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

Fairy.

'Stars! your balmiest influence shed!
Elements! your wrath suspend!
Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds
That circle thy domain!
Let not a breath be seen to stir
Around yon grass-grown ruin'
height,
Let even the restless gossamer
Sleep on the moveless air!
Soul of Ianthe! thou,
Judged alone worthy of the envie
boon,
That waits the good and the sincere
that waits
Those who have struggled, and wit
resolute will
Vanquished earth's pride and mean
ness, burst the chains,
The icy chains of custom, and have
shone
The day-stars of their age;—Soul o
Ianthe!
Awake! arise!'

Sudden arose
Ianthe's Soul; it stood
All beautiful in naked purity,
The perfect semblance of its bodily
frame.
Instinct with inexpressible beauty and
grace,
Each stain of earthliness
Had passed away, it reassumed
Its native dignity, and stood
Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay
Wrapped in the depth of slumber:
Its features were fixed and meaningless,
Yet animal life was there,
And every organ yet performed
Its natural functions: 'twas a sight
Of wonder to behold the body and soul.
The self-same lineaments, the same
Marks of identity were there:
Yet, oh, how different! One aspires to
Heaven,
Pants for its sempiternal heritage,
And ever-changing, ever-rising still,
Wantons in endless being.
The other, for a time the unwilling
sport
Of circumstance and passion, struggles
on;
Fleets through its sad duration rapidly;

Then, like an useless and worn-out machine,
Rots, perishes, and passes.

Fairy.

'Spirit! who hast dived so deep;
Spirit! who hast soared so high;
Thou the fearless, thou the mild,
Accept the boon thy worth hath earned,
Ascend the car with me.'

Spirit.

'Do I dream? Is this new feeling
But a visioned ghost of slumber?
If indeed I am a soul,
A free, a disembodied soul,
Speak again to me.'

Fairy.

I am the Fairy Mab: to me 'tis given
The wonders of the human world to keep:
The secrets of the immeasurable past,
n the unfailing consciences of men,
Those stern, unflattering chroniclers, I find:
The future, from the causes which arise
n each event, I gather: not the sting
Which retributive memory implants
n the hard bosom of the selfish man;
Nor that ecstatic and exulting throb
Which virtue's votary feels when he sums up
The thoughts and actions of a well-spent day,
Are unforeseen, unregistered by me:
And it is yet permitted me, to rend
The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit,
Clothed in its changeless purity, may know
How soonest to accomplish the great end
For which it hath its being, and may taste
That peace, which in the end all life will share.
This is the meed of virtue; happy Soul,
Ascend the car with me!'

The chains of earth's immurement
Fell from Ianthe's spirit;
They shrank and brake like bandages of straw
Beneath a wakened giant's strength.
She knew her glorious change,
And felt in apprehension uncontrolled
New raptures opening round:
Each day-dream of her mortal life,
Each frenzied vision of the slumbers
That closed each well-spent day,
Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded;
The silver clouds disparted;
And as the car of magic they ascended,
Again the speechless music swelled,
Again the coursers of the air
Unfurled their azure pennons, and the Queen
Shaking the beamy reins
Bade them pursue their way.

The magic car moved on.
The night was fair, and countless stars
Studded Heaven's dark blue vault,—
Just o'er the eastern wave
Peeped the first faint smile of morn:—
The magic car moved on—
From the celestial hoofs
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew,
And where the burning wheels
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak,
Was traced a line of lightning.
Now it flew far above a rock,
The utmost verge of earth,
The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow
Lowered o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's path,
Calm as a slumbering babe,
Tremendous Ocean lay.
The mirror of its stillness showed
The pale and waning stars,
The chariot's fiery track,
And the gray light of morn

Tinging those fleecy clouds
That canopied the dawn.
Seemed it, that the chariot's way
Lay through the midst of an immense concave,
Radiant with million constellations, tinged
With shades of infinite colour,
And semicircled with a belt
Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.
As they approached their goal
The coursers seemed to gather speed;
The sea no longer was distinguished; earth
Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere;
The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave;
Its rays of rapid light
Parted around the chariot's swifter course,
And fell, like ocean's feathery spray
Dashed from the boiling surge
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
Earth's distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven;
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever-varying glory.
It was a sight of wonder: some
Were hornèd like the crescent moon;
Some shed a mild and silver beam
Like Hesperus o'er the western sea;
Some dashed athwart with trains of flame,
Like worlds to death and ruin driven;
Some shone like suns, and, as the chariot passed,
Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here!
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the lightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze
Is less instinct with thee:
Yet not the meanest worm
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
Less shares thy eternal breath.
Spirit of Nature! thou!
Imperishable as this scene,
Here is thy fitting temple.

II

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
To the wild Ocean's echoing shore,
And thou hast lingered there,
Until the sun's broad orb
Seemed resting on the burnished wave,
Thou must have marked the lines
Of purple gold, that motionless
Hung o'er the sinking sphere:
Thou must have marked the billowy clouds
Edged with intolerable radiancy
Towering like rocks of jet
Crowned with a diamond wreath.
And yet there is a moment,
When the sun's highest point
Peeps like a star o'er Ocean's western edge,
When those far clouds of feathery gold,
Shaded with deepest purple, gleam
Like islands on a dark blue sea;
Then has thy fancy soared above the earth,
And furled its wearied wing
Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands
Gleaming in yon flood of light,
Nor the feathery curtains
Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch,
Nor the burnished Ocean waves
Paving that gorgeous dome,
So fair, so wonderful a sight
As Mab's aethereal palace could afford.
Yet likest evening's vault, that faery Hall!
As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it spread
Its floors of flashing light,
Its vast and azure dome,

Its fertile golden islands
Floating on a silver sea;
Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted
Through clouds of circumambient darkness,
And pearly battlements around
Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.

The magic car no longer moved.
The Fairy and the Spirit
Entered the Hall of Spells:
Those golden clouds
That rolled in glittering billows
Beneath the azure canopy
With the aethereal footsteps trembled not:
The light and crimson mists,
Floating to strains of thrilling melody
Through that unearthly dwelling,
Yielded to every movement of the will.
Upon their passive swell the Spirit leaned,
And, for the varied bliss that pressed around,
Used not the glorious privilege
Of virtue and of wisdom.

'Spirit!' the Fairy said,
And pointed to the gorgeous dome,
'This is a wondrous sight
And mocks all human grandeur;
But, were it virtue's only meed, to dwell
In a celestial palace, all resigned
To pleasurable impulses, immured
Within the prison of itself, the will
Of changeless Nature would be unfulfilled.
Learn to make others happy. Spirit, come!
This is thine high reward:—the past shall rise;
Thou shalt behold the present; I will teach
The secrets of the future.'

The Fairy and the Spirit
Approached the overhanging battlement.—
Below lay stretched the universe!
There, far as the remotest line
That bounds imagination's flight,
Countless and unending orbs
In mazy motion intermingled,
Yet still fulfilled immutably
Eternal Nature's law.
Above, below, around,
The circling systems formed
A wilderness of harmony;
Each with undeviating aim,
In eloquent silence, through the depths of space
Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light
That twinkled in the misty distance:
None but a spirit's eye
Might ken that rolling orb;
None but a spirit's eye,
And in no other place
But that celestial dwelling, might behold
Each action of this earth's inhabitants.
But matter, space and time
In those aëreal mansions cease to act;
And all-prevailing wisdom, when it reaps
The harvest of its excellence, o'erbounds
Those obstacles, of which an earthly soul
Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.
The Spirit's intellectual eye
Its kindred beings recognized.
The thronging thousands, to a passing view,
Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.
How wonderful! that even
The passions, prejudices, interests,
That sway the meanest being, the weak touch
That moves the finest nerve,
And in one human brain
Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link
In the great chain of Nature.

'Behold,' the Fairy cried,
'Palmyra's ruined palaces!—
Behold! where grandeur frowned;

Behold! where pleasure smiled;
What now remains?—the memory
Of senselessness and shame—
What is immortal there?
Nothing—it stands to tell
A melancholy tale, to give
An awful warning: soon
Oblivion will steal silently
The remnant of its fame.
Monarchs and conquerors there
Proud o'er prostrate millions trod—
The earthquakes of the human race;
Like them, forgotten when the ruin
That marks their shock is past.

'Beside the eternal Nile,
The Pyramids have risen.
Nile shall pursue his changeless way:
Those Pyramids shall fall;
Yea! not a stone shall stand to tell
The spot whereon they stood!
Their very site shall be forgotten,
As is their builder's name!

'Behold yon sterile spot;
Where now the wandering Arab's tent
Flaps in the desert-blast.
There once old Salem's haughty fane
Reared high to Heaven its thousand golden domes,
And in the blushing face of day
Exposed its shameful glory.
Oh! many a widow, many an orphan cursed
The building of that fane; and many a father,
Worn out with toil and slavery, implored
The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth,
And spare his children the detested task
Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning
The choicest days of life,
To soothe a dotard's vanity.
There an inhuman and uncultured race
Howled hideous praises to their Demon-God;
They rushed to war, tore from the mother's womb
The unborn child,—old age and infancy
Promiscuous perished; their victorious arms
Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they were fiends:
But what was he who taught them that the God
Of nature and benevolence hath given
A special sanction to the trade o
blood?
His name and theirs are fading, and the tales
Of this barbarian nation, which imposture
Recites till terror credits, are pursuing
Itself into forgetfulness.

'Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta stood,
There is a moral desert now:
The mean and miserable huts,
The yet more wretched palaces,
Contrasted with those ancient fanes,
Now crumbling to oblivion;
The long and lonely colonnades,
Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks,
Seem like a well-known tune,
Which in some dear scene we have loved to hear,
Remembered now in sadness.
But, oh! how much more changed,
How gloomier is the contrast
Of human nature there!
Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave,
A coward and a fool, spreads death around—
Then, shuddering, meets his own.
Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,
A cowled and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses and deceives.

'Spirit, ten thousand years
Have scarcely passed away,
Since, in the waste where now the savage drinks
His enemy's blood, and aping Europe's sons,

Wakes the unholy song of war,
Arose a stately city,
Metropolis of the western continent:
There, now, the mossy column-stone,
Indented by Time's unrelaxing grasp,
Which once appeared to brave
All, save its country's ruin;
There the wide forest scene,
Rude in the uncultivated loveliness
Of gardens long run wild,
Seems, to the unwilling sojourner, whose steps
Chance in that desert has delayed,
Thus to have stood since earth was what it is.
Yet once it was the busiest haunt,
Whither, as to a common centre, flocked
Strangers, and ships, and merchandise:
Once peace and freedom blessed
The cultivated plain:
But wealth, that curse of man,
Blighted the bud of its prosperity:
Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,
Fled, to return not, until man shall know
That they alone can give the bliss
Worthy a soul that claims
Its kindred with eternity.

'There's not one atom of yon earth
But once was living man;
Nor the minutest drop of rain,
That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,
But flowed in human veins:
And from the burning plains
Where Libyan monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless clime,
To where the golden fields
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the day,
Thou canst not find one spot
Whereon no city stood.

'How strange is human pride!
I tell thee that those living things,
To whom the fragile blade of grass,
That springeth in the morn
And perisheth ere noon,
Is an unbounded world;
I tell thee that those viewless beings,
Whose mansion is the smallest particle
Of the impassive atmosphere,
Think, feel and live like man;
That their affections and antipathies,
Like his, produce the laws
Ruling their moral state;
And the minutest throb
That through their frame diffuses
The slightest, faintest motion,
Is fixed and indispensable
As the majestic laws
That rule yon rolling orbs.'

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,
In ecstasy of admiration, felt
All knowledge of the past revived; the events
Of old and wondrous times,
Which dim tradition interruptedly
Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded
In just perspective to the view;
Yet dim from their infinitude.
The Spirit seemed to stand
High on an isolated pinnacle;
The flood of ages combating below,
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around
Nature's unchanging harmony.

III

'Fairy!' the Spirit said,
And on the Queen of Spells
Fixed her aethereal eyes,
'I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and taught
A lesson not to be unlearned. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive
Experience from his folly:
For, when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other Heaven.'

Mab.

'Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!
Much yet remains unscanned.

Thou knowest how great is man,
Thou knowest his imbecility:
Yet learn thou what he is:
Yet learn the lofty destiny
Which restless time prepares
For every living soul.

'Behold a gorgeous palace, that, amid
Yon populous city rears its thousand towers
And seems itself a city. Gloomy troops
Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks,
Encompass it around: the dweller there
Cannot be free and happy; hearest thou not
The curses of the fatherless, the groans
Of those who have no friend? He passes on:
The King, the wearer of a gilded chain
That binds his soul to abjectness, the fool
Whom courtiers nickname monarch, whilst a slave
Even to the basest appetites—that man
Heeds not the shriek of penury; he smiles
At the deep curses which the destitute
Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy
Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan
But for those morsels which his wantonness
Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save
All that they love from famine: when he hears
The tale of horror, to some ready-made face
Of hypocritical assent he turns,
Smothering the glow of shame, that, spite of him,
Flushes his bloated cheek.
Now to the meal
Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he drags
His palled unwilling appetite. If gold,
Gleaming around, and numerous viands culled
From every clime, could force the loathing sense
To overcome satiety,—if wealth
The spring it draws from poisons not,—or vice,
Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth not
Its food to deadliest venom; then that king
Is happy; and the peasant who fulfils
His unforced task, when he returns at even,
And by the blazing faggot meets agai
Her welcome for whom all his toil is sped,
Tastes not a sweeter meal.
Behold him now
Stretched on the gorgeous couch; his fevered brain
Reels dizzily awhile: but ah! too soo
The slumber of intemperance subsides,
And conscience, that undying serpent calls
Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task.
Listen! he speaks! oh! mark that frenzied eye—
Oh! mark that deadly visage.'

King.

'No cessation
Oh! must this last for ever? Awfu Death,
I wish, yet fear to clasp thee!—Nor one moment
Of dreamless sleep! O dear and blessèd peace!
Why dost thou shroud thy vesta purity
In penury and dungeons? wherefore lurkest
With danger, death, and solitude; yet shunn'st
The palace I have built thee? Sacred peace!
Oh visit me but once, but pitying shed
One drop of balm upon my withered soul.'

The Fairy.

'Vain man! that palace is the virtuous heart,
And Peace defileth not her snowy robes

In such a shed as thine. Hark! yet he mutters;
His slumbers are but varied agonies,
They prey like scorpions on the springs of life.
There needeth not the hell that bigots frame
To punish those who err: earth in itself
Contains at once the evil and the cure;
And all-sufficing Nature can chastise
Those who transgress her law,—she only knows
How justly to proportion to the fault
The punishment it merits.
                                        Is it strange
That this poor wretch should pride him in his woe?
Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug
The scorpion that consumes him? Is it strange
That, placed on a conspicuous throne of thorns,
Grasping an iron sceptre, and immured
Within a splendid prison, whose stern bounds
Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth,
His soul asserts not its humanity?
That man's mild nature rises not in war
Against a king's employ? No—'tis not strange.
He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts and lives
Just as his father did; the unconquered powers
Of precedent and custom interpose
Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger yet,
To those who know not Nature, nor deduce
The future from the present, it may seem,
That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes
Of this unnatural being; not one wretch,
Whose children famish, and whose nuptial bed
Is earth's unpitying bosom, rears an arm
To dash him from his throne!
                                        Those gilded flies
That, basking in the sunshine of a court,
Fatten on its corruption!—what are they?
—The drones of the community; they feed
On the mechanic's labour: the starved hind
For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield
Its unshared harvests; and yon squalid form,
Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes
A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,
Drags out in labour a protracted death,
To glut their grandeur; many faint with toil,
That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.

'Whence, think'st thou, kings and parasites arose?
Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap
Toil and unvanquishable penury
On those who build their palaces, and bring
Their daily bread?—From vice, black loathsome vice;
From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong;
From all that 'genders misery, and makes
Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust,
Revenge, and murder. . . . And when Reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have waked
The nations; and mankind perceive that vice
Is discord, war, and misery; that virtue
Is peace, and happiness and harmony;
When man's maturer nature shall disdain

The playthings of its childhood;—kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority
Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,
Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now.
                    Where is the fame
Which the vainglorious mighty of the earth
Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound
From Time's light footfall, the minutest wave
That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing
The unsubstantial bubble. Ay! to-day
Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze
That flashes desolation, strong the arm
That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes!
That mandate is a thunder-peal that died
In ages past; that gaze, a transient flash
On which the midnight closed, and on that arm
The worm has made his meal.
                    The virtuous man,
Who, great in his humility, as kings
Are little in their grandeur; he who leads
Invincibly a life of resolute good,
And stands amid the silent dungeon-depths
More free and fearless than the trembling judge,
Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove
To bind the impassive spirit;—when he falls,
His mild eye beams benevolence no more:
Withered the hand outstretched but to relieve;
Sunk Reason's simple eloquence, that rolled
But to appal the guilty. Yes! the grave
Hath quenched that eye, and Death's relentless frost
Withered that arm: but the unfading fame
Which Virtue hangs upon its votary's tomb;
The deathless memory of that man, whom kings
Call to their mind and tremble; the remembrance
With which the happy spirit contemplates
Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,
Shall never pass away.

'Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen: for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery.
                    The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and, of the human frame,
A mechanized automaton.
                    When Nero,
High over flaming Rome, with savage joy
Lowered like a fiend, drank with enraptured ear
The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld
The frightful desolation spread, and felt
A new-created sense within his soul
Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the sound;
Think'st thou his grandeur had not overcome
The force of human kindness? and, when Rome,

With one stern blow, hurled not the tyrant down,
Crushed not the arm red with her dearest blood,
Had not submissive abjectness destroyed
Nature's suggestions?
Look on yonder earth:
The golden harvests spring; the unfailing sun
Sheds light and life; the fruits, the flowers, the trees,
Arise in due succession; all things speak
Peace, harmony, and love. The universe,
In Nature's silent eloquence, declares
That all fulfil the works of love and joy,—
All but the outcast, Man. He fabricates
The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth
The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up
The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch
Than on the dome of kings? Is mother Earth
A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn
Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil;
A mother only to those puling babes
Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men
The playthings of their babyhood, and mar,
In self-important childishness, that peace
Which men alone appreciate?

'Spirit of Nature! no.
The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs
Alike in every human heart.
Thou, aye, erectest there
Thy throne of power unappealable:
Thou art the judge beneath whose nod
Man's brief and frail authority
Is powerless as the wind
That passeth idly by.
Thine the tribunal which surpasseth
The show of human justice,
As God surpasses man.

'Spirit of Nature! thou
Life of interminable multitudes;
Soul of those mighty spheres
Whose changeless paths through Heaven's deep silence lie;
Soul of that smallest being,
The dwelling of whose life
Is one faint April sun-gleam;—
Man, like these passive things,
Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:
Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
Which time is fast maturing,
Will swiftly, surely come;
And the unbounded frame, which thou pervadest,
Will be without a flaw
Marring its perfect symmetry.

IV

'How beautiful this night! the balmiest sigh,
Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear,
Were discord to the speaking quietude
That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon vault,
Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
Seems like a canopy which love had spread
To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills,
Robed in a garment of untrodden snow;
Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles depend,
So stainless, that their white and glittering spires
Tinge not the moon's pure beam; yon castled steep,
Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-worn tower
So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth it

A metaphor of peace ;—all form a scene
Where musing Solitude might love to lift
Her soul above this sphere of earthliness ;
Where Silence undisturbed might watch alone,
So cold, so bright, so still.
The orb of day,
In southern climes, o'er ocean's waveless field
Sinks sweetly smiling : not the faintest breath
Steals o'er the unruffled deep ; the clouds of eve
Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day ;
And vesper's image on the western main
Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes :
Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass,
Roll o'er the blackened waters ; the deep roar
Of distant thunder mutters awfully ;
Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom
That shrouds the boiling surge ; the pitiless fiend,
With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey ;
The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds a grave
Beneath its jaggèd gulf.
Ah ! whence yon glare
That fires the arch of Heaven ?—that dark red smoke
Blotting the silver moon ? The stars are quenched
In darkness, and the pure and spangling snow
Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round !
Hark to that roar, whose swift and deaf'ning peals
In countless echoes through the mountains ring,
Startling pale Midnight on her starry throne !
Now swells the intermingling din ; the jar
Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb ;
The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout,
The ceaseless clangour, and the rush of men
Inebriate with rage :—loud, and more loud
The discord grows ; till pale Death shuts the scene,
And o'er the conqueror and the conquered draws
His cold and bloody shroud.—Of all the men
Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there,
In proud and vigorous health ; of all the hearts
That beat with anxious life at sunset there ;
How few survive, how few are beating now !
All is deep silence, like the fearful calm
That slumbers in the storm's portentous pause ;
Save when the frantic wail of widowed love
Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan
With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay
Wrapped round its struggling powers.
The gray morn
Dawns on the mournful scene ; the sulphurous smoke
Before the icy wind slow rolls away,
And the bright beams of frosty morning dance
Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood
Even to the forest's depth, and scattered arms,
And lifeless warriors, whose hard lineaments
Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path
Of the outsallying victors : far behind,
Black ashes note where their proud city stood.
Within yon forest is a gloomy glen—

Each tree which guards its darkness from the day,
Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.
I see thee shrink,
Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human else?
I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet
Across thy stainless features: yet fear not;
This is no unconnected misery,
Nor stands uncaused, and irretrievable.
Man's evil nature, that apology
Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up
For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood
Which desolates the discord-wasted land.
From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose,
Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe,
Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe
Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall;
And where its venomed exhalations spread
Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay
Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones
Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,
A garden shall arise, in loveliness
Surpassing fabled Eden.
Hath Nature's soul,
That formed this world so beautiful, that spread
Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord
Strung to unchanging unison, that gave
The happy birds their dwelling in the grove,
That yielded to the wanderers of the deep
The lovely silence of the unfathomed main,
And filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust
With spirit, thought, and love; on Man alone,
Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul
Blasted with withering curses; placed afar
The meteor-happiness, that shuns his grasp,
But serving on the frightful gulf to glare,
Rent wide beneath his footsteps?
Nature!—no!
Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast the human flower
Even in its tender bud; their influence darts
Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins
Of desolate society. The child,
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,
Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts
His baby-sword even in a hero's mood.
This infant-arm becomes the bloodiest scourge
Of devastated earth; whilst specious names,
Learned in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour,
Serve as the sophisms with which manhood dims
Bright Reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword
Upraised to shed a brother's innocent blood.
Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
Inherits vice and misery, when Force
And Falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,
Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good.
'Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first it peeps
From its new tenement, and looks abroad
For happiness and sympathy, how stern
And desolate a tract is this wide world!

How withered all the buds of natural good!
No shade, no shelter from the sweeping storms
Of pitiless power! On its wretched frame,
Poisoned, perchance, by the disease and woe
Heaped on the wretched parent whence it sprung
By morals, law, and custom, the pure winds
Of Heaven, that renovate the insect tribes,
May breathe not. The untainting light of day
May visit not its longings. It is bound
Ere it has life: yea, all the chains are forged
Long ere its being: all liberty and love
And peace is torn from its defencelessness;
Cursed from its birth, even from its cradle doomed
To abjectness and bondage!

'Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element: the block
That for uncounted ages has remained
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active, living spirit. Every grain
Is sentient both in unity and part,
And the minutest atom comprehends
A world of loves and hatreds; these beget
Evil and good: hence truth and falsehood spring;
Hence will and thought and action, all the germs
Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,
That variegate the eternal universe.
Soul is not more polluted than the beams
Of Heaven's pure orb, ere round their rapid lines
The taint of earth-born atmospheres arise.

'Man is of soul and body, formed fo deeds
Of high resolve, on fancy's boldes wing
To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn
The keenest pangs to peacefulness and taste
The joys which mingled sense an spirit yield.
Or he is formed for abjectness and woe
To grovel on the dunghill of his fears
To shrink at every sound, to quenc the flame
Of natural love in sensualism, to kno
That hour as blessed when on his worthless days
The frozen hand of Death shall set it seal,
Yet fear the cure, though hating th disease.
The one is man that shall hereafte be;
The other, man as vice has made hi now.

'War is the statesman's game, th priest's delight,
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin' trade,
And, to those royal murderers, whose mean thrones
Are bought by crimes of treachery an gore,
The bread they eat, the staff on whic they lean.
Guards, garbed in blood-red livery, surround
Their palaces, participate the crimes
That force defends, and from a nation' rage
Secure the crown, which all the curse reach
That famine, frenzy, woe and penury breathe.
These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne—the bullies of hi fear:
These are the sinks and channels o worst vice,
The refuse of society, the dregs

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Of all that is most vile: their cold hearts blend
Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride,
All that is mean and villanous, with rage
Which hopelessness of good, and self-contempt,
Alone might kindle; they are decked in wealth,
Honour and power, then are sent abroad
To do their work. The pestilence that stalks
In gloomy triumph through some eastern land
Is less destroying. They cajole with gold,
And promises of fame, the thoughtless youth
Already crushed with servitude: he knows
His wretchedness too late, and cherishes
Repentance for his ruin, when his doom
Is sealed in gold and blood!
Those too the tyrant serve, who, skilled to snare
The feet of Justice in the toils of law,
Stand, ready to oppress the weaker still;
And right or wrong will vindicate for gold,
Sneering at public virtue, which beneath
Their pitiless tread lies torn and trampled, where
Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.

'Then grave and hoary-headed hypocrites,
Without a hope, a passion, or a love,
Who, through a life of luxury and lies,
Have crept by flattery to the seats of power,
Support the system whence their honours flow. . . .
They have three words:—well tyrants know their use,
Well pay them for the loan, with usury
Torn from a bleeding world!—God, Hell, and Heaven.
A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend,
Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage
Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.
Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
Where poisonous and undying worms prolong
Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
Whose life has been a penance for its crimes.
And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie
Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe
Before the mockeries of earthly power.

'These tools the tyrant tempers to his work,
Wields in his wrath, and as he wills destroys,
Omnipotent in wickedness: the while
Youth springs, age moulders, manhood tamely does
His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys to lend
Force to the weakness of his trembling arm.

'They rise, they fall; one generation comes
Yielding its harvest to destruction's scythe.
It fades, another blossoms: yet behold!
Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on its bloom,
Withering and cankering deep its passive prime.
He has invented lying words and modes,
Empty and vain as his own coreless heart;
Evasive meanings, nothings of much sound,
To lure the heedless victim to the toils
Spread round the valley of its paradise.

'Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or prince!
Whether thy trade is falsehood, and thy lusts
Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor,
With whom thy Master was:—or thou delight'st
In numbering o'er the myriads of thy slain,

All misery weighing nothing in the scale
Against thy short-lived fame: or thou dost load
With cowardice and crime the groaning land,
A pomp-fed king. Look to thy wretched self!
Ay, art thou not the veriest slave that e'er
Crawled on the loathing earth? Are not thy days
Days of unsatisfying listlessness?
Dost thou not cry, ere night's long rack is o'er,
"When will the morning come?" Is not thy youth
A vain and feverish dream of sensualism?
Thy manhood blighted with unripe disease?
Are not thy views of unregretted death
Drear, comfortless, and horrible? Thy mind,
Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame,
Incapable of judgement, hope, or love?
And dost thou wish the errors to survive
That bar thee from all sympathies of good,
After the miserable interest
Thou hold'st in their protraction? When the grave
Has swallowed up thy memory and thyself,
Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth
To twine its roots around thy coffined clay,
Spring from thy bones, and blossom on thy tomb,
That of its fruit thy babes may eat and die?

V

'Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb,
Surviving still the imperishable change
That renovates the world; even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
Has scattered on the forest soil, and heaped
For many seasons there—though long they choke,
Loading with loathsome rottenness the land,
All germs of promise, yet when the tall trees
From which they fell, shorn of their lovely shapes,
Lie level with the earth to moulder there,
They fertilize the land they long deformed,
Till from the breathing lawn a forest springs
Of youth, integrity, and loveliness,
Like that which gave it life, to spring and die.
Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
The fairest feelings of the opening heart,
Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil
Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love,
And judgement cease to wage unnatural war
With passion's unsubduable array.
Twin-sister of religion, selfishness!
Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all
The wanton horrors of her bloody play;
Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless,
Shunning the light, and owning not its name,
Compelled, by its deformity, to screen
With flimsy veil of justice and of right,
Its unattractive lineaments, that scare
All, save the brood of ignorance: at once
The cause and the effect of tyranny;
Unblushing, hardened, sensual, and vile;
Dead to all love but of its abjectness,
With heart impassive by more noble powers
Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain, or fame;

Despising its own miserable being,
Which still it longs, yet fears to disenthrall.

'Hence commerce springs, the venal interchange
Of all that human art or nature yield;
Which wealth should purchase not, but want demand,
And natural kindness hasten to supply
From the full fountain of its boundless love,
For ever stifled, drained, and tainted now.
Commerce! beneath whose poison-breathing shade
No solitary virtue dares to spring,
But Poverty and Wealth with equal hand
Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
The doors of premature and violent death,
To pining famine and full-fed disease,
To all that shares the lot of human life,
Which poisoned, body and soul, scarce drags the chain,
That lengthens as it goes and clanks behind.

'Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power
Upon a shining ore, and called it gold:
Before whose image bow the vulgar great,
The vainly rich, the miserable proud,
The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings,
And with blind feelings reverence the power
That grinds them to the dust of misery.
But in the temple of their hireling hearts
Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.

'Since tyrants, by the sale of human life,
Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and fame
To their wide-wasting and insatiate pride,
Success has sanctioned to a credulous world
The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of war.
His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes
The despot numbers; from his cabinet
These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,
Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
A task of cold and brutal drudgery;—
Hardened to hope, insensible to fear,
Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,
Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth!

'The harmony and happiness of man
Yields to the wealth of nations; that which lifts
His nature to the heaven of its pride,
Is bartered for the poison of his soul;
The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes,
Blighting all prospect but of selfish gain,
Withering all passion but of slavish fear,
Extinguishing all free and generous love
Of enterprise and daring, even the pulse
That fancy kindles in the beating heart
To mingle with sensation, it destroys,—
Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self,
The grovelling hope of interest and gold,
Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed
Even by hypocrisy.
And statesmen boast
Of wealth! The wordy eloquence, that lives
After the ruin of their hearts, can gild
The bitter poison of a nation's woe,
Can turn the worship of the servile mob
To their corrupt and glaring idol, Fame,
From Virtue, trampled by its iron tread,

Although its dazzling pedestal be raised
Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,
With desolated dwellings smoking round.
The man of ease, who, by his warm fireside,
To deeds of charitable intercourse,
And bare fulfilment of the common laws
Of decency and prejudice, confines
The struggling nature of his human heart,
Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds
A passing tear perchance upon the wreck
Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door
The frightful waves are driven,—when his son
Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion
Drives his wife raving mad. But the poor man,
Whose life is misery, and fear, and care;
Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil;
Who ever hears his famished offspring's scream,
Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze
For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye
Flashing command, and the heartbreaking scene
Of thousands like himself;—he little heeds
The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate
Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn
The vain and bitter mockery of words,
Feeling the horror of the tyrant's deeds,
And unrestrained but by the arm of power,
That knows and dreads his enmity.

'The iron rod of Penury still compels
Her wretched slave to bow the knee to wealth,
And poison, with unprofitable toil,
A life too void of solace to confirm
The very chains that bind him to his doom.
Nature, impartial in munificence,
Has gifted man with all-subduing will.
Matter, with all its transitory shapes,
Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,
That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread.
How many a rustic Milton has passed by,
Stifling the speechless longings of his heart,
In unremitting drudgery and care!
How many a vulgar Cato has compelled
His energies, no longer tameless then,
To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!
How many a Newton, to whose passive ken
Those mighty spheres that gem infinity
Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in Heaven
To light the midnights of his native town!

'Yet every heart contains perfection's germ:
The wisest of the sages of the earth,
That ever from the stores of reason drew
Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone,
Were but a weak and inexperienced boy,
Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unimbued
With pure desire and universal love,
Compared to that high being, of cloudless brain,
Untainted passion, elevated will,
Which Death (who even would linger long in awe
Within his noble presence, and beneath
His changeless eyebeam) might alone subdue.
Him, every slave now dragging through the filth
Of some corrupted city his sad life,
Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,

Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense
With narrow schemings and unworthy cares,
Or madly rushing through all violent crime,
To move the deep stagnation of his soul,—
Might imitate and equal.
But mean lust
Has bound its chains so tight around the earth,
That all within it but the virtuous man
Is venal: gold or fame will surely reach
The price prefixed by selfishness, to all
But him of resolute and unchanging will;
Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile crowd,
Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,
Can bribe to yield his elevated soul
To Tyranny or Falsehood, though they wield
With blood-red hand the sceptre of the world.

'All things are sold: the very light of Heaven
Is venal; earth's unsparing gifts of love,
The smallest and most despicable things
That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
All objects of our life, even life itself,
And the poor pittance which the laws allow
Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
Those duties which his heart of human love
Should urge him to perform instinctively,
Are bought and sold as in a public mart
Of undisguising selfishness, that sets
On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign.
Even love is sold; the solace of all woe
Is turned to deadliest agony, old age
Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms,
And youth's corrupted impulses prepare
A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs
From unenjoying sensualism, has filled
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

'Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs
Of outraged conscience; for the slavish priest
Sets no great value on his hireling faith:
A little passing pomp, some servile souls,
Whom cowardice itself might safely chain,
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe
To deck the triumph of their languid zeal,
Can make him minister to tyranny.
More daring crime requires a loftier meed:
Without a shudder, the slave-soldier lends
His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart,
When the dread eloquence of dying men,
Low mingling on the lonely field of fame,
Assails that nature, whose applause he sells
For the gross blessings of a patriot mob,
For the vile gratitude of heartless kings,
And for a cold world's good word,—viler still!

'There is a nobler glory, which survives
Until our being fades, and, solacing
All human care, accompanies its change;
Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's gloom,
And, in the precincts of the palace, guides
Its footsteps through that labyrinth of crime;
Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness,
Even when, from Power's avenging hand, he takes
Its sweetest, last and noblest title—death;

—The consciousness of good, which neither gold,
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss
Can purchase; but a life of resolute good,
Unalterable will, quenchless desire
Of universal happiness, the heart
That beats with it in unison, the brain,
Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to change
Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal.

'This commerce of sincerest virtue needs
No mediative signs of selfishness,
No jealous intercourse of wretched gain,
No balancings of prudence, cold and long;
In just and equal measure all is weighed,
One scale contains the sum of human weal,
And one, the good man's heart.
How vainly seek
The selfish for that happiness denied
To aught but virtue! Blind and hardened, they,
Who hope for peace amid the storms of care,
Who covet power they know not how to use,
And sigh for pleasure they refuse to give,—
Madly they frustrate still their own designs;
And, where they hope that quiet to enjoy
Which virtue pictures, bitterness of soul,
Pining regrets, and vain repentances,
Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade
Their valueless and miserable lives.

'But hoary-headed Selfishness has felt
Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave:
A brighter morn awaits the human day,
When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
Shall be a commerce of good words and works;
When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,
The fear of infamy, disease and woe,
War with its million horrors, and fierce hell
Shall live but in the memory of Time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger years.'

VI

All touch, all eye, all ear,
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning speech.
O'er the thin texture of its frame,
The varying periods painted changing glows,
As on a summer even,
When soul-enfolding music floats around,
The stainless mirror of the lake
Re-images the eastern gloom,
Mingling convulsively its purple hues
With sunset's burnished gold.

Then thus the Spirit spoke:
'It is a wild and miserable world!
Thorny, and full of care,
Which every fiend can make his prey at will.
O Fairy! in the lapse of years,
Is there no hope in store?
Will yon vast suns roll on
Interminably, still illuming
The night of so many wretched souls,
And see no hope for them?
Will not the universal Spirit e'er
Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?'

The Fairy calmly smiled
In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope
Suffused the Spirit's lineaments.
'Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those fearful doubts,
Which ne'er could rack an everlasting soul,
That sees the chains which bind it to its doom.

Yes! crime and misery are in yonder earth,
Falsehood, mistake, and lust;
But the eternal world
Contains at once the evil and the cure.
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest time:
The truths of their pure lips, that never die,
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath
Of ever-living flame,
Until the monster sting itself to death.

'How sweet a scene will earth become!
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
When man, with changeless Nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.

'Spirit! on yonder earth,
Falsehood now triumphs; deadly power
Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth!
Madness and misery are there!
The happiest is most wretched! Yet confide,
Until pure health-drops, from the cup of joy,
Fall like a dew of balm upon the world.
Now, to the scene I show, in silence turn,
And read the blood-stained charter of all woe,
Which Nature soon, with re-creating hand,
Will blot in mercy from the book of earth.
How bold the flight of Passion's wandering wing,
How swift the step of Reason's firmer tread,
How calm and sweet the victories of life,
How terrorless the triumph of the grave!
How powerless were the mightiest monarch's arm,
Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown!
How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar!
The weight of his exterminating curse
How light! and his affected charity,
To suit the pressure of the changing times,
What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid,
Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
Who peoplest earth with demons, Hell with men,
And Heaven with slaves!

'Thou taintest all thou look'st upon!—the stars,
Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distempered playfulness
Of thy untutored infancy: the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becam'st, a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to Nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief
Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;
Thine eager gaze scanned the stupendous scene,

Whose wonders mocked the knowledge of thy pride:
Their everlasting and unchanging laws
Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile thou stoodst
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
The elements of all that thou didst know;
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,
The budding of the Heaven-breathing trees,
The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
The sunrise, and the setting of the moon,
Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
And all their causes, to an abstract point
Converging, thou didst bend and called it God!
The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,
The merciful, and the avenging God!
Who, prototype of human misrule, sits
High in Heaven's realm, upon a golden throne,
Even like an earthly king; and whose dread work,
Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy slaves
Of fate, whom He created, in his sport,
To triumph in their torments when they fell!
Earth heard the name; Earth trembled, as the smoke
Of His revenge ascended up to Heaven,
Blotting the constellations; and the cries
Of millions, butchered in sweet confidence
And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds
Of safety were confirmed by wordy oaths
Sworn in His dreadful name, rung through the land;
Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear,
And thou didst laugh to hear the mother's shriek
Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel
Felt cold in her torn entrails!

'Religion! thou wert then in manhood's prime:
But age crept on: one God would not suffice
For senile puerility; thou framedst
A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut
Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad fiend
Thy wickedness had pictured might afford
A plea for sating the unnatural thirst
For murder, rapine, violence, and crime,
That still consumed thy being, even when
Thou heardst the step of Fate;—that flames might light
Thy funeral scene, and the shrill horrent shrieks
Of parents dying on the pile that burned
To light their children to thy paths, the roar
Of the encircling flames, the exulting cries
Of thine apostles, loud commingling there,
Might sate thine hungry ear
Even on the bed of death!

'But now contempt is mocking thy gray hairs;
Thou art descending to the darksome grave,
Unhonoured and unpitied, but by those
Whose pride is passing by like thine, and sheds,
Like thine, a glare that fades before the sun
Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night
That long has lowered above the ruined world.

'Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,
Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused
A Spirit of activity and life,

That knows no term, cessation, or decay;
That fades not when the lamp of earthly life,
Extinguished in the dampness of the grave,
Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe
In the dim newness of its being feels
The impulses of sublunary things,
And all is wonder to unpractised sense:
But, active, steadfast, and eternal, still
Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,
Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,
Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease;
And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly
Rolls round the eternal universe, and shakes
Its undecaying battlement, presides,
Apportioning with irresistible law
The place each spring of its machine shall fill;
So that when waves on waves tumultuous heap
Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely driven
Heaven's lightnings scorch the uprooted ocean-fords,
Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked mariner,
Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering rock,
All seems unlinked contingency and chance:
No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.
Even the minutest molecule of light,
That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow
Fulfils its destined, though invisible work,
The universal Spirit guides; nor less,
When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,
Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-field,
That, blind, they there may dig each other's graves,
And call the sad work glory, does it rule
All passions: not a thought, a will, an act,
No working of the tyrant's moody mind,
Nor one misgiving of the slaves who boast
Their servitude, to hide the shame they feel,
Nor the events enchaining every will,
That from the depths of unrecorded time
Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass
Unrecognized, or unforeseen by thee,
Soul of the Universe! eternal spring
Of life and death, of happiness and woe,
Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene
That floats before our eyes in wavering light,
Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison,
Whose chains and massy walls
We feel, but cannot see.

'Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
Necessity! thou mother of the world!
Unlike the God of human error, thou
Requir'st no prayers or praises; the caprice
Of man's weak will belongs no more to thee
Than do the changeful passions of his breast
To thy unvarying harmony: the slave,
Whose horrible lusts spread misery o'er the world,
And the good man, who lifts, with virtuous pride,
His being, in the sight of happiness,
That springs from his own works; the poison-tree,
Beneath whose shade all life is withered up,
And the fair oak, whose leafy dome affords
A temple where the vows of happy love
Are registered, are equal in thy sight:

No love, no hate thou cherishest; revenge
And favouritism, and worst desire of fame
Thou know'st not: all that the wide world contains
Are but thy passive instruments, and thou
Regard'st them all with an impartial eye,
Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,
Because thou hast not human sense,
Because thou art not human mind.

'Yes! when the sweeping storm of time
Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruined fanes
And broken altars of the almighty Fiend
Whose name usurps thy honours, and the blood
Through centuries clotted there, has floated down
The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou live
Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to thee,
Which, nor the tempest-breath of time,
Nor the interminable flood,
Over earth's slight pageant rolling,
Availeth to destroy,—
The sensitive extension of the world.
That wondrous and eternal fane,
Where pain and pleasure, good and evil join,
To do the will of strong necessity,
And life, in multitudinous shapes,
Still pressing forward where no term can be,
Like hungry and unresting flame
Curls round the eternal columns of its strength.'

VII

Spirit.

'I WAS an infant when my mother went
To see an atheist burned. She took me there:
The dark-robed priests were met around the pile;
The multitude was gazing silently;
And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth:
The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon;
His death-pang rent my heart! the insensate mob
Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
"Weep not, child!" cried my mother, "for that man
Has said, There is no God."'

Fairy.

'There is no God!
Nature confirms the faith his death-groan sealed:
Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,
His ceaseless generations tell their tale;
Let every part depending on the chain
That links it to the whole, point to the hand
That grasps its term! let every seed that falls
In silent eloquence unfold its store
Of argument; infinity within,
Infinity without, belie creation;
The exterminable spirit it contains
Is nature's only God; but human pride
Is skilful to invent most serious names
To hide its ignorance.
The name of God
Has fenced about all crime with holiness,
Himself the creature of His worshippers,
Whose names and attributes and passions change,
Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord,
Even with the human dupes who build His shrines,

Still serving o'er the war-polluted world
For desolation's watchword; whether hosts
Stain His death-blushing chariot-wheels, as on
Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brahmins raise
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans;
Or countless partners of His power divide
His tyranny to weakness; or the smoke
Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness,
Unarmed old age, and youth, and infancy,
Horribly massacred, ascend to Heaven
In honour of His name; or, last and worst,
Earth groans beneath religion's iron age,
And priests dare babble of a God of peace,
Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood,
Murdering the while, uprooting every germ
Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all,
Making the earth a slaughter-house!

'O Spirit! through the sense
By which thy inner nature was apprised
Of outward shows, vague dreams have rolled,
And varied reminiscences have waked
Tablets that never fade;
All things have been imprinted there,
The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky,
Even the unshapeliest lineaments
Of wild and fleeting visions
Have left a record there
To testify of earth.

'These are my empire, for to me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
And Fancy's thin creations to endow
With manner, being, and reality;
Therefore a wondrous phantom, from the dreams
Of human error's dense and purblind faith,
I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.
Ahasuerus, rise!'

A strange and woe-worn wight
Arose beside the battlement,
And stood unmoving there.
His inessential figure cast no shade
Upon the golden floor;
His port and mien bore mark of many years,
And chronicles of untold ancientness
Were legible within his beamless eye:
Yet his cheek bore the mark of youth;
Freshness and vigour knit his manly frame;
The wisdom of old age was mingled there
With youth's primaeval dauntlessness;
And inexpressible woe,
Chastened by fearless resignation, gave
An awful grace to his all-speaking brow.

Spirit.

'Is there a God?'

Ahasuerus.

'Is there a God!—ay, an almighty God,
And vengeful as almighty! Once His voice
Was heard on earth: earth shuddered at the sound;
The fiery-visaged firmament expressed
Abhorrence, and the grave of Nature yawned
To swallow all the dauntless and the good
That dared to hurl defiance at His throne,
Girt as it was with power. None but slaves

Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who did the work
Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose souls
No honest indignation ever urged
To elevated daring, to one deed
Which gross and sensual self did not pollute.
These slaves built temples for the omnipotent Fiend,
Gorgeous and vast: the costly altars smoked
With human blood, and hideous paeans rung
Through all the long-drawn aisles. A murderer heard
His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts and arts
Had raised him to his eminence in power,
Accomplice of omnipotence in crime,
And confidant of the all-knowing one.
These were Jehovah's words:—

'From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth
From nothing; rested, and created man:
I placed him in a Paradise, and there
Planted the tree of evil, so that he
Might eat and perish, and My soul procure
Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn,
Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
All misery to My fame. The race of men
Chosen to My honour, with impunity
May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.
Here I command thee hence to lead them on,
Until, with hardened feet, their conquering troops
Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood,
And make My name be dreaded through the land.
Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless woe
Shall be the doom of their eternal souls,
With every soul on this ungrateful earth,
Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—even all
Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
(Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.'

The murderer's brow
Quivered with horror.
'God omnipotent,
Is there no mercy? must our punishment
Be endless? will long ages roll away,
And see no term? Oh! wherefore hast Thou made
In mockery and wrath this evil earth?
Mercy becomes the powerful—be but just:
O God! repent and save.'

'One way remains:
I will beget a Son, and He shall bear
The sins of all the world; He shall arise
In an unnoticed corner of the earth,
And there shall die upon a cross, and purge
The universal crime; so that the few
On whom My grace descends, those who are marked
As vessels to the honour of their God,
May credit this strange sacrifice, and save
Their souls alive: millions shall live and die,
Who ne'er shall call upon their Saviour's name,
But, unredeemed, go to the gaping grave.
Thousands shall deem it an old woman's tale,
Such as the nurses frighten babes withal:
These in a gulf of anguish and of flame
Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to avow,

Even on their beds of torment, where they howl,
My honour, and the justice of their doom.
What then avail their virtuous deeds, their thoughts
Of purity, with radiant genius bright,
Or lit with human reason's earthly ray?
Many are called, but few will I elect.
Do thou My bidding, Moses!'
Even the murderer's cheek
Was blanched with horror, and his quivering lips
Scarce faintly uttered—'O almighty One,
I tremble and obey!'

'O Spirit! centuries have set their seal
On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain,
Since the Incarnate came: humbly He came,
Veiling His horrible Godhead in the shape
Of man, scorned by the world, His name unheard,
Save by the rabble of His native town,
Even as a parish demagogue. He led
The crowd; He taught them justice, truth, and peace,
In semblance; but He lit within their souls
The quenchless flames of zeal, and blessed the sword
He brought on earth to satiate with the blood
Of truth and freedom His malignant soul.
At length His mortal frame was led to death.
I stood beside Him: on the torturing cross
No pain assailed His unterrestrial sense;
And yet He groaned. Indignantly I summed
The massacres and miseries which His name
Had sanctioned in my country, and I cried,
"Go! Go!" in mockery.
A smile of godlike malice reillumed
His fading lineaments.—"I go," He cried,
"But thou shalt wander o'er the unquiet earth
Eternally."——The dampness of the grave
Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,
And long lay tranced upon the charmèd soil.
When I awoke Hell burned within my brain,
Which staggered on its seat; for all around
The mouldering relics of my kindred lay,
Even as the Almighty's ire arrested them,
And in their various attitudes of death
My murdered children's mute and eyeless skulls
Glared ghastily upon me.
But my soul,
From sight and sense of the polluting woe
Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer
Hell's freedom to the servitude of Heaven.
Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began
My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unweariable war
With my almighty Tyrant, and to hurl
Defiance at His impotence to harm
Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand
That barred my passage to the peaceful grave
Has crushed the earth to misery, and given
Its empire to the chosen of His slaves.
These have I seen, even from the earliest dawn
Of weak, unstable and precarious power,

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180 reillumined *ed. 1813.*

Then preaching peace, as now they practise war;
So, when they turned but from the massacre
Of unoffending infidels, to quench
Their thirst for ruin in the very blood
That flowed in their own veins, and pitiless zeal
Froze every human feeling, as the wife
Sheathed in her husband's heart the sacred steel,
Even whilst its hopes were dreaming of her love;
And friends to friends, brothers to brothers stood
Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war,
Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught, waged,
Drunk from the winepress of the Almighty's wrath;
Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace,
Pointed to victory! When the fray was done,
No remnant of the exterminated faith
Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh,
With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere,
That rotted on the half-extinguished pile.

'Yes! I have seen God's worshippers unsheathe
The sword of His revenge, when grace descended,
Confirming all unnatural impulses,
To sanctify their desolating deeds;
And frantic priests waved the ill-omened cross
O'er the unhappy earth: then shone the sun
On showers of gore from the upflashing steel
Of safe assassination, and all crime
Made stingless by the Spirits of the Lord,
And blood-red rainbows canopied the land.

'Spirit, no year of my eventful being
Has passed unstained by crime and misery,
Which flows from God's own faith. I've marked His slaves
With tongues whose lies are venomous, beguile
The insensate mob, and, whilst one hand was red
With murder, feign to stretch the other out
For brotherhood and peace; and that they now
Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds
Are marked with all the narrowness and crime
That Freedom's young arm dare not yet chastise,
Reason may claim our gratitude, who now
Establishing the imperishable throne
Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh vain
The unprevailing malice of my Foe,
Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave,
Adds impotent eternities to pain,
Whilst keenest disappointment racks His breast
To see the smiles of peace around them play,
To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.

'Thus have I stood,—through a wild waste of years
Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony,
Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-enshrined,
Mocking my powerless Tyrant's horrible curse
With stubborn and unalterable will,
Even as a giant oak, which Heaven's fierce flame
Had scathèd in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there;
Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves
The midnight conflict of the wintry storm,
As in the sunlight's calm it spreads

Its worn and withered arms on high
To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.'

The Fairy waved her wand:
Ahasuerus fled
Fast as the shapes of mingled shade and mist,
That lurk in the glens of a twilight grove,
Flee from the morning beam:
The matter of which dreams are made
Not more endowed with actual life
Than this phantasmal portraiture
Of wandering human thought.

VIII

The Fairy.

'The Present and the Past thou hast beheld:
It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit, learn
The secrets of the Future.—Time!
Unfold the brooding pinion of thy gloom,
Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,
And from the cradles of eternity,
Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep
By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,
Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold
Thy glorious destiny!'

Joy to the Spirit came.
Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil,
Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear:
Earth was no longer Hell;
Love, freedom, health, had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,
And all its pulses beat
Symphonious to the planetary spheres:
Then dulcet music swelled
Concordant with the life-strings of the soul;
It throbbed in sweet and languid beatings there,
Catching new life from transitory death,—
Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea
And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits:
Was the pure stream of feeling
That sprung from these sweet notes,
And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies
With mild and gentle motion calmly flowed.

Joy to the Spirit came,—
Such joy as when a lover sees
The chosen of his soul in happiness,
And witnesses her peace
Whose woe to him were bitterer than death,
Sees her unfaded cheek
Glow mantling in first luxury of health,
Thrills with her lovely eyes,
Which like two stars amid the heaving main
Sparkle through liquid bliss.

Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy Queen:
'I will not call the ghost of ages gone
To unfold the frightful secrets of its lore;
The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the earth
Have faded from the memory of Time,
Who dares not give reality to that
Whose being I annul. To me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
Space, matter, time, and mind. Futurity
Exposes now its treasure; let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.
O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal
Where virtue fixes universal peace,
And midst the ebb and flow of human things,

Show somewhat stable, somewhat certain still,
A lighthouse o'er the wild of dreary waves.

'The habitable earth is full of bliss;
Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
By everlasting snowstorms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate or live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet
To murmur through the Heaven-breathing groves
And melodize with man's blest nature there.

'Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age-collected fervours scarce allowed
A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and shady woods,
Cornfields and pastures and white cottages;
And where the startled wilderness beheld
A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,
A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs
The unnatural famine of her toothless cubs,
Whilst shouts and howlings through the desert rang,
Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles
To see a babe before his mother's door,
Sharing his morning's meal
With the green and golden basilisk
That comes to lick his feet.

'Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail
Has seen above the illimitable plain,
Morning on night, and night on morning rise,
Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread
Its shadowy mountains on the sun-bright sea,
Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves
So long have mingled with the gusty wind
In melancholy loneliness, and swept
The desert of those ocean solitudes,
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,
The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,
Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds
Of kindliest human impulses respond.
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,
With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,
And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,
Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,
Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore,
To meet the kisses of the flow'rets there.

'All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck
To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
Rewarding her with their pure perfectness:
The balmy breathings of the wind inhale
Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad:

Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere,
Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream:
No storms deform the beaming brow of Heaven,
Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride
The foliage of the ever-verdant trees;
But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,
And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring,
Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.

'The lion now forgets to thirst for blood:
There might you see him sporting in the sun
Beside the dreadless kid; his claws are sheathed,
His teeth are harmless, custom's force has made
His nature as the nature of a lamb.
Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's tempting bane
Poisons no more the pleasure it bestows:
All bitterness is past; the cup of joy
Unmingled mantles to the goblet's brim,
And courts the thirsty lips it fled before.

'But chief, ambiguous Man, he that can know
More misery, and dream more joy than all;
Whose keen sensations thrill within his breast
To mingle with a loftier instinct there,
Lending their power to pleasure and to pain,
Yet raising, sharpening, and refining each;
Who stands amid the ever-varying world,
The burthen or the glory of the earth;
He chief perceives the change, his being notes
The gradual renovation, and defines
Each movement of its progress on his mind.

'Man, where the gloom of the long polar night
Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,
Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost
Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,
Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night;
His chilled and narrow energies, his heart,
Insensible to courage, truth, or love,
His stunted stature and imbecile frame,
Marked him for some abortion of the earth,
Fit compeer of the bears that roamed around,
Whose habits and enjoyments were his own:
His life a feverish dream of stagnant woe,
Whose meagre wants, but scantily fulfilled,
Apprised him ever of the joyless length
Which his short being's wretchedness had reached;
His death a pang which famine, cold and toil
Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital spark
Clung to the body stubbornly, had brought:
All was inflicted here that Earth's revenge
Could wreak on the infringers of her law;
One curse alone was spared—the name of God.

'Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day
With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,

Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed
Unnatural vegetation, where the land
Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease,
Was Man a nobler being; slavery
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust;
Or he was bartered for the fame of power,
Which all internal impulses destroying,
Makes human will an article of trade;
Or he was changed with Christians for their gold,
And dragged to distant isles, where to the sound
Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does the work
Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,
Which doubly visits on the tyrants' heads
The long-protracted fulness of their woe;
Or he was led to legal butchery,
To turn to worms beneath that burning sun,
Where kings first leagued against the rights of men,
And priests first traded with the name of God.

'Even where the milder zone afforded Man
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,
Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth till late
Availed to arrest its progress, or create
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved
Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime:
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,
The mimic of surrounding misery,
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

'Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;
Blessed from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires.
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing
Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Dawns on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks
The unprevailing hoariness of age,
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands
Immortal upon earth: no longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face,
And horribly devours his mangled flesh,
Which, still avenging Nature's broken law,
Kindled all putrid humours in his frame,
All evil passions, and all vain belief,
Hatred, despair, and loathing in his mind,
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.
No longer now the wingèd habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
All things are void of terror: Man has lost

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204 exhaustless store *ed. 1813.*

205 Draws *ed. 1813.* *See Editor's Note.*

His terrible prerogative, and stands
An equal amidst equals: happiness
And science dawn though late upon the earth;
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
Reason and passion cease to combat there;
Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth extend
Their all-subduing energies, and wield
The sceptre of a vast dominion there;
Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth
To decorate its Paradise of peace.'

IX

'O happy Earth! reality of Heaven!
To which those restless souls that ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe, aspire;
Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!
Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
Verge to one point and blend for ever there:
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,
Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

'Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined
Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss
Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.
Thou art the end of all desire and will,
The product of all action; and the souls
That by the paths of an aspiring change
Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace,
There rest from the eternity of toil
That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

'Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee in his fear;
That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride,
So long had ruled the world, that nations fell
Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,
That for millenniums had withstood the tide
Of human things, his storm-breath drove in sand
Across that desert where their stones survived
The name of him whose pride had heaped them there.
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,
Was but the mushroom of a summer day,
That his light-wingèd footstep pressed to dust:
Time was the king of earth: all things gave way
Before him, but the fixed and virtuous will,
The sacred sympathies of soul and sense,
That mocked his fury and prepared his fall.

'Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn of love;
Long lay the clouds of darkness o'er the scene,
Till from its native Heaven they rolled away:
First, Crime triumphant o'er all hope careered
Unblushing, undisguising, bold and strong;
Whilst Falsehood, tricked in Virtue's attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,

Till done by her own venomous sting to death,
She left the moral world without a law,
No longer fettering Passion's fearless wing,
Nor searing Reason with the brand of God.
Then steadily the happy ferment worked;
Reason was free; and wild though Passion went
Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads,
Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,
Yet like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow,
Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child,
No longer trembling at the broken rod.

'Mild was the slow necessity of death:
The tranquil spirit failed beneath its grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
And full of wonder, full of hope as he.
The deadly germs of languor and disease
Died in the human frame, and Purity
Blessed with all gifts her earthly worshippers.
How vigorous then the athletic form of age!
How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care,
Had stamped the seal of gray deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
Which meek-eyed courage decked with freshest grace;
Courage of soul, that dreaded not a name,
And elevated will, that journeyed on
Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness,
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand.

'Then, that sweet bondage which is Freedom's self,
And rivets with sensation's softest tie
The kindred sympathies of human souls,
Needed no fetters of tyrannic law:
Those delicate and timid impulses
In Nature's primal modesty arose,
And with undoubted confidence disclosed
The growing longings of its dawning love,
Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity,
That virtue of the cheaply virtuous,
Who pride themselves in senselessness and frost.
No longer prostitution's venomed bane
Poisoned the springs of happiness and life;
Woman and man, in confidence and love,
Equal and free and pure together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more
Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.

'Then, where, through distant ages, long in pride
The palace of the monarch-slave had mocked
Famine's faint groan, and Penury's silent tear,
A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and threw
Year after year their stones upon the field,
Wakening a lonely echo; and the leaves
Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower
Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur, shook
In the stern storm that swayed the topmost tower
And whispered strange tales in the Whirlwind's ear.

'Low through the lone cathedral's roofless aisles
The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung:
It were a sight of awfulness to see
The works of faith and slavery, so vast,
So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal!
Even as the corpse that rests beneath its wall.
A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death
To-day, the breathing marble glows above
To decorate its memory, and tongues
Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms
In silence and in darkness seize their prey.

'Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,
Fearless and free the ruddy children played,
Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows
With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;
The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,
There rusted amid heaps of broken stone
That mingled slowly with their native earth:
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once
Lighted the cheek of lean Captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, then freely shone
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse Despair
Pealed through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds
And merriment were resonant around.

'These ruins soon left not a wreck behind:
Their elements, wide scattered o'er the globe,
To happier shapes were moulded, and became
Ministrant to all blissful impulses:
Thus human things were perfected, and earth,
Even as a child beneath its mother's love,
Was strengthened in all excellence, and grew
Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

'Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past
Fades from our charmèd sight. My task is done:
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,
With all the fear and all the hope they bring.
My spells are passed: the present now recurs.
Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

'Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change:
For birth and life and death, and that strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:
For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense
Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape
New modes of passion to its frame may lend;

Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there
That variegate the eternal universe;
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies
And happy regions of eternal hope.
Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on:
Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
Yet Spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
To feed with kindliest dews its favourite flower,
That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,
Lighting the greenwood with its sunny smile.

'Fear not then, Spirit, Death's disrobing hand,
So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch burns;
'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,
The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep.
Death is no foe to Virtue: earth has seen
Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,
Mingling with Freedom's fadeless laurels there,
And presaging the truth of visioned bliss.
Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene
Of linked and gradual being has confirmed?
Whose stingings bade thy heart look further still,
When, to the moonlight walk by Henry led,
Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death?
And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast,
Listening supinely to a bigot's creed,
Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod,
Whose iron thongs are red with human gore?
Never: but bravely bearing on, thy will
Is destined an eternal war to wage
With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot
The germs of misery from the human heart.
Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease:
Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
When fenced by power and master of the world.
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind,
Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,
Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.
Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,
And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
Which thou hast now received: Virtue shall keep
Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,
And many days of beaming hope shall bless
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture from thy smile.'

The Fairy waves her wand of charm.
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car,
That rolled beside the battlement,
Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.

Again the enchanted steeds were yoked,
Again the burning wheels inflame
The steep descent of Heaven's untrodden way.
Fast and far the chariot flew:
The vast and fiery globes that rolled
Around the Fairy's palace-gate
Lessened by slow degrees and soon appeared
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs
That there attendant on the solar power
With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.

Earth floated then below:
The chariot paused a moment there;
The Spirit then descended:
The restless coursers pawed the ungenial soil,
Snuffed the gross air, and then, their errand done,
Unfurled their pinions to the winds of Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then,
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained:
She looked around in wonder and beheld
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch,
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,
And the bright beaming stars
That through the casement shone.

NOTES ON QUEEN MAB

SHELLEY'S NOTES

I. 242, 243:—

The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave.

Beyond our atmosphere the sun would appear a rayless orb of fire in the midst of a black concave. The equal diffusion of its light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere, and their reflection from other bodies. Light consists either of vibrations propagated through a subtle medium, or of numerous minute particles repelled in all directions from the luminous body. Its velocity greatly exceeds that of any substance with which we are acquainted: observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites have demonstrated that light takes up no more than 8′ 7″ in passing from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,000,000 miles.—Some idea may be gained of the immense distance of the fixed stars when it is computed that many years would elapse before light could reach this earth from the nearest of them; yet in one year light travels 5,422,400,000,000 miles, which is a distance 5,707,600 times greater than that of the sun from the earth.

I. 252, 253:—

Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled.

The plurality of worlds,—the indefinite immensity of the universe, is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe. It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman; or is angered at the consequences of that necessity, which is a synonym of itself. All that miserable tale of the Devil, and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcilable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of His fingers have borne witness against Him.

The nearest of the fixed stars is inconceivably distant from the earth, and they are probably proportionably distant from each other. By a calculation of the velocity of light, Sirius is supposed to be at least 54,224,000,000,000 miles from the earth[1]. That which appears only like a thin and silvery cloud streaking the heaven is in effect composed of innumerable clusters of suns, each shining with its own light, and illuminating numbers of planets that revolve around them. Millions and millions of suns are ranged around us, all attended by innumerable worlds, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, all keeping the paths of immutable necessity.

IV. 178, 179:—

These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne.

To employ murder as a means of justice is an idea which a man of an enlightened mind will not dwell upon with pleasure. To march forth in rank and file, and all the pomp of streamers and trumpets, for the purpose of shooting at our fellow-men as a mark; to inflict upon them all the variety of wound and anguish; to leave them weltering in their blood; to wander over the field of desolation, and count the number of the dying and the dead,—are employments which in thesis we may maintain to be necessary, but which no good man will contemplate with gratulation and delight. A battle we suppose is won:—thus truth is established, thus the cause of justice is confirmed! It surely requires no common sagacity to discern the connexion between this immense heap of calamities and the assertion of truth or the maintenance of justice.

'Kings, and ministers of state, the real authors of the calamity, sit unmolested in their cabinet, while those against whom the fury of the storm is directed are, for the most part, persons who have been trepanned into the service, or who are dragged unwillingly from their peaceful homes into the field of battle. A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him, and who are the innocent martyrs of other men's iniquities. Whatever may become of the abstract question of the justifiableness of war, it seems impossible that the soldier should not be a depraved and unnatural being.

To these more serious and momentous considerations it may be proper to add a recollection of the ridiculousness of the military character. Its first constituent is obedience: a soldier is, of all descriptions of men, the most completely a machine; yet his profession inevitably teaches him something of dogmatism, swaggering, and self-consequence: he is like the puppet of a showman, who, at the very time he is made to strut and swell and display the most farcical airs, we perfectly know cannot assume the most insignificant gesture, advance either to the right or the left, but as he is moved by his exhibitor.'—Godwin's *Enquirer*, Essay v.

I will here subjoin a little poem, so strongly expressive of my abhorrence of despotism and falsehood, that I fear lest it never again may be depictured so vividly. This opportunity is perhaps the only one that ever will occur of rescuing it from oblivion.

FALSEHOOD AND VICE

A DIALOGUE

WHILST monarchs laughed upon their thrones
To hear a famished nation's groans,
And hugged the wealth wrung from the woe
That makes its eyes and veins o'erflow,—
Those thrones, high built upon the heaps
Of bones where frenzied Famine sleeps,
Where Slavery wields her scourge of iron,

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[1] See Nicholson's *Encyclopedia*, art. Light.

Red with mankind's unheeded gore,
And War's mad fiends the scene environ,
Mingling with shrieks a drunken roar,
There Vice and Falsehood took their stand,
High raised above the unhappy land.

Falsehood.

Brother! arise from the dainty fare,
Which thousands have toiled and bled to bestow;
A finer feast for thy hungry ear
Is the news that I bring of human woe.

Vice.

And, secret one, what hast thou done,
To compare, in thy tumid pride, with me?
I, whose career, through the blasted year,
Has been tracked by despair and agony.

Falsehood.

What have I done!——I have torn the robe
From baby Truth's unsheltered form,
And round the desolated globe
Borne safely the bewildering charm:
My tyrant-slaves to a dungeon-floor
Have bound the fearless innocent,
And streams of fertilizing gore
Flow from her bosom's hideous rent,
Which this unfailing dagger gave. . . .
I dread that blood!—no more—this day
Is ours, though her eternal ray
  Must shine upon our grave.
Yet know, proud Vice, had I not given
To thee the robe I stole from Heaven,
Thy shape of ugliness and fear
Had never gained admission here.

Vice.

And know, that had I disdained to toil,
But sate in my loathsome cave the while,
And ne'er to these hateful sons of Heaven,
GOLD, MONARCHY, and MURDER, given;
Hadst thou with all thine art essayed
One of thy games then to have played,
With all thine overweening boast,
Falsehood! I tell thee thou hadst lost!—
Yet wherefore this dispute?—we tend,
Fraternal, to one common end;
In this cold grave beneath my feet,
Will our hopes, our fears, and our labours, meet.

Falsehood.

I brought my daughter, RELIGION, on earth:
She smothered Reason's babes in their birth;
But dreaded their mother's eye severe,—
So the crocodile slunk off slily in fear,
And loosed her bloodhounds from the den. . . .
They started from dreams of slaughtered men,
And, by the light of her poison eye,
Did her work o'er the wide earth frightfully:
The dreadful stench of her torches' flare,
Fed with human fat, polluted the air:
The curses, the shrieks, the ceaseless cries
Of the many-mingling miseries,
As on she trod, ascended high
And trumpeted my victory!—
Brother, tell what thou hast done.

Vice.

I have extinguished the noonday sun,
In the carnage-smoke of battles won:
Famine, Murder, Hell and Power
Were glutted in that glorious hour
Which searchless fate had stamped for me
With the seal of her security. . . .
For the bloated wretch on yonder throne
Commanded the bloody fray to rise.
Like me he joyed at the stifled moan
Wrung from a nation's miseries;
While the snakes, whose slime even him *defiled*,
In ecstasies of malice smiled:
They thought 'twas theirs,—but mine the deed!
Theirs is the toil, but mine the meed—

Ten thousand victims madly bleed.
They dream that tyrants goad them there
With poisonous war to taint the air:
These tyrants, on their beds of thorn,
Swell with the thoughts of murderous fame,
And with their gains to lift my name
Restless they plan from night to morn:
I—I do all; without my aid
Thy daughter, that relentless maid,
Could never o'er a death-bed urge
The fury of her venomed scourge.

Falsehood.

Brother, well:—the world is ours;
And whether thou or I have won,
The pestilence expectant lowers
On all beneath yon blasted sun.
Our joys, our toils, our honours meet
In the milk-white and wormy winding-sheet:
A short-lived hope, unceasing care,
Some heartless scraps of godly prayer,
A moody curse, and a frenzied sleep
Ere gapes the grave's unclosing deep,
A tyrant's dream, a coward's start,
The ice that clings to a priestly heart,
A judge's frown, a courtier's smile,
Make the great whole for which we toil;
And, brother, whether thou or I
Have done the work of misery,
It little boots: thy toil and pain,
Without my aid, were more than vain;
And but for thee I ne'er had sate
The guardian of Heaven's palace gate.

V. 1, 2:—

Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb.

'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.'—*Ecclesiastes*, chap. i. vv. 4–7.

V. 4–6:—

Even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
Has scattered on the forest soil.

Οἵη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
Φύλλα τὰ μέν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη
Τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρῃ.
Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή, ἡ μὲν φύει, ἡ δ' ἀπολήγει.
ΙΛΙΑΔ. Ζ, l. 146.

V. 58:—

The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings.

Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquam est iucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est.
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
Per campos instructa, tua sine parte pericli;
Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre
Errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae;
Certare ingenio; contendere nobilitate;
Noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.
O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora caeca! *Lucret.* lib. ii.

V. 93, 94:—

And statesmen boast
Of wealth!

There is no real wealth but the

labour of man. Were the mountains of gold and the valleys of silver, the world would not be one grain of corn the richer; no one comfort would be added to the human race. In consequence of our consideration for the precious metals, one man is enabled to heap to himself luxuries at the expense of the necessaries of his neighbour; a system admirably fitted to produce all the varieties of disease and crime, which never fail to characterize the two extremes of opulence and penury. A speculator takes pride to himself as the promoter of his country's prosperity, who employs a number of hands in the manufacture of articles avowedly destitute of use, or subservient only to the unhallowed cravings of luxury and ostentation. The nobleman, who employs the peasants of his neighbourhood in building his palaces, until '*jam pauca aratro jugera regiae moles relinquunt*,' flatters himself that he has gained the title of a patriot by yielding to the impulses of vanity. The show and pomp of courts adduce the same apology for its continuance; and many a fête has been given, many a woman has eclipsed her beauty by her dress, to benefit the labouring poor and to encourage trade. Who does not see that this is a remedy which aggravates whilst it palliates the countless diseases of society? The poor are set to labour, —for what? Not the food for which they famish: not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels: not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him:—no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society. No greater evidence is afforded of the wide extended and radical mistakes of civilized man than this fact: those arts which are essential to his very being are held in the greatest contempt; employments are lucrative in an inverse ratio to their usefulness[1]: the jeweller, the toyman, the actor gains fame and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivator of the earth, he without whom society must cease to subsist, struggles through contempt and penury, and perishes by that famine which but for his unceasing exertions would annihilate the rest of mankind

I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the natural equality of man. The question is not concerning its desirableness, but its practicability: so far as it is practicable, it is desirable. That state of human society which approaches nearer to an equal partition of its benefits and evils should, *caeteris paribus*, be preferred: but so long as we conceive that a wanton expenditure of human labour, not for the necessities, not even for the luxuries of the mass of society, but for the egotism and ostentation of a few of its members, is defensible on the ground of public justice, so long we neglect to approximate to the redemption of the human race.

Labour is required for physical, and leisure for moral improvement: from the former of these advantages the rich, and from the latter the poor, by the inevitable conditions of their respective situations, are precluded. A state which should combine the advantages of both would be subjected to the evils of neither. He that is deficient in firm health, or vigorous intellect, is but half a man: hence it follows that to subject the labouring classes to unnecessary labour is wantonly depriving them of any opportunities of intellectual improvement;

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[1] See Rousseau, *De l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes*, note 7.

and that the rich are heaping up for their own mischief the disease, lassitude, and ennui by which their existence is rendered an intolerable burthen.

English reformers exclaim against sinecures,—but the true pension list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit. The laws which support this system derive their force from the ignorance and credulity of its victims: they are the result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort.

'The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species form a very short catalogue: they demand from us but a slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and, still more, if it were equitably divided among all, each man's share of labour would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when this leisure would have been of small comparative value: it is to be hoped that the time will come when it will be applied to the most important purposes. Those hours which are not required for the production of the necessaries of life may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.

. . . .

'It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist, before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But surely, after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and invention, monopoly and oppression cannot be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism.' —Godwin's *Enquirer*, Essay ii. See also *Pol. Jus.*, book VIII, chap. ii.

It is a calculation of this admirable author, that all the conveniences of civilized life might be produced, if society would divide the labour equally among its members, by each individual being employed in labour two hours during the day.

V. 112, 113:—

or religion
Drives his wife raving mad.

I am acquainted with a lady of considerable accomplishments, and the mother of a numerous family, whom the Christian religion has goaded to incurable insanity. A parallel case is, I believe, within the experience of every physician.

Nam iam saepe homines patriam, carosque parentes
Prodiderunt, vitare Acherusia templa petentes. *Lucretius.*

V. 189:—

Even love is sold.

Not even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connection to last? what law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious an usurpation of the right of private judgement should that law be considered which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlightened morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling![1]

But if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and disunions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensation it is calculated to produce, then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporizing spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the object of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry. The language of the votarist is this: The woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one and the truth of the other, resolving blindly, and in spite of conviction, to adhere to them. Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart of more worth than its belief?

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites or open enemies. Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner or the welfare of their mutual offspring: those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of their children takes its colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill-humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery: they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse: they indulge without restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill-temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

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[1] The first Christian emperor made a law by which seduction was punished with death; if the female pleaded her own consent, she also was punished with death; if the parents endeavoured to screen the criminals, they were banished and their estates were confiscated; the slaves who might be accessory were burned alive, or forced to swallow melted lead. The very offspring of an illegal love were involved in the consequences of the sentence. — Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, etc., vol. ii, p. 210. See also, for the hatred of the primitive Christians to love and even marriage, p. 269.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder; and the punishment which is inflicted on her who destroys her child to escape reproach is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrecoverably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature;—society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease: yet *she* is in fault, *she* is the criminal, *she* the froward and untamable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is employed in anathematizing the vice to-day, which yesterday she was the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one-tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is twofold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those exquisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted worldlings have denied; annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiocy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer for the bigoted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

I conceive that from the abolition of marriage, the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary, it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion. But this is a subject which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the abolition of marriage will be natural and right; because choice and change will be exempted from restraint.

In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image should she look in the mirror of nature!

VI. 45, 46:—

To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.

The north polar star, to which the axis of the earth, in its present state of obliquity, points. It is exceedingly probable, from many considerations, that this obliquity will gradually diminish, until the equator coincides with the ecliptic: the nights and days will then become equal on the earth throughout the year, and probably the seasons also. There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. Astronomy teaches us that the earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic. The strong evidence afforded by the history of mythology, and geological researches, that some event of this nature has taken place already, affords a strong presumption that this progress is not merely an oscillation, as has been surmised by some late astronomers[1]. Bones of animals peculiar to the torrid zone have been found in the north of Siberia, and on the banks of the river Ohio. Plants have been found in the fossil state in the interior of Germany, which demand the present climate of Hindostan for their production[2]. The researches of M. Bailly[3] establish the existence of a people who inhabited a tract in Tartary 49° north latitude, of greater antiquity than either the Indians, the Chinese, or the Chaldeans, from whom these nations derived their sciences and theology. We find, from the testimony of ancient writers, that Britain, Germany, and France were much colder than at present, and that their great rivers were annually frozen over. Astronomy teaches us also that since this period the obliquity of the earth's position has been considerably diminished.

VI. 171–173:—

No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.

'Deux exemples serviront à nous rendre plus sensible le principe qui vient d'être posé; nous emprunterons l'un du physique et l'autre du moral. Dans un tourbillon de poussière qu'élève un vent impétueux, quelque confus qu'il paraisse à nos yeux; dans la plus affreuse tempête excitée par des vents opposés qui soulèvent les flots,—il n'y a pas une seule molécule de poussière ou d'eau qui soit placée au *hasard*, qui n'ait sa cause suffisante pour occuper le lieu où elle se trouve, et qui n'agisse rigoureusement de la manière dont elle doit agir. Un géomètre qui connaîtrait exactement les différentes forces qui agissent dans ces deux cas, et les propriétés des molécules qui sont mues, démontrerait que d'après des causes données, chaque molécule agit précisément comme elle doit agir, et ne peut agir autrement qu'elle ne fait.

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[1] Laplace, *Système du Monde.*

[2] Cabanis, *Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme,* vol. ii, p. 406.

[3] Bailly, *Lettres sur les Sciences, à Voltaire.*

'Dans les convulsions terribles qui agitent quelquefois les sociétés politiques, et qui produisent souvent le renversement d'un empire, il n'y a pas une seule action, une seule parole, une seule pensée, une seule volonté, une seule passion dans les agens qui concourent à la révolution comme destructeurs ou comme victimes, qui ne soit nécessaire, qui n'agisse comme elle doit agir, qui n'opère infailliblement les effets qu'elle doit opérer, suivant la place qu'occupent ces agens dans ce tourbillon moral. Cela paraîtrait évident pour une intelligence qui sera en état de saisir et d'apprécier toutes les actions et réactions des esprits et des corps de ceux qui contribuent à cette révolution.'—*Système de la Nature*, vol. i, p. 44.

VI. 198 :—

Necessity! thou mother of the world!

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act. The idea of necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other. Mankind are therefore agreed in the admission of necessity, if they admit that these two circumstances take place in voluntary action. Motive is to voluntary action in the human mind what cause is to effect in the material universe. The word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance as applied to matter: they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is. Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science; from like causes it would be in vain that we should expect like effects; the strongest motive would no longer be paramount over the conduct; all knowledge would be vague and undeterminate; we could not predict with any certainty that we might not meet as an enemy to-morrow him with whom we have parted in friendship to-night; the most probable inducements and the clearest reasonings would lose the invariable influence they possess. The contrary of this is demonstrably the fact. Similar circumstances produce the same unvariable effects. The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances. Why is the aged husbandman more experienced than the young beginner? Because there is a uniform, undeniable necessity in the operations of the material universe. Why is the old statesman more skilful than the raw politician? Because, relying on the necessary conjunction of motive and action, he proceeds to produce moral effects, by the application of those moral causes which experience has shown to be effectual. Some actions may be found to which we can attach no motives, but these are the effects of causes with which we are unacquainted. Hence the relation which motive bears to voluntary action is that of cause to effect; nor, placed in this point of view, is it, or ever has it been, the subject of popular or philosophical dispute. None but the few fanatics who are engaged in the herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer outrage common sense by the supposition of an event without a cause, a voluntary action without a motive. History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasonings, all principles of science, alike assume the truth of the doctrine of Necessity. No farmer carrying his corn to market doubts the sale of it at the market price. The master of a manufactory no more doubts that he can purchase the human labour necessary for his purposes than that his machinery will act as they have been accustomed to act.

But, whilst none have scrupled to admit necessity as influencing matter, many have disputed its dominion over mind. Independently of its militating with the received ideas of the justice of God, it is by no means obvious to a superficial inquiry. When the mind observes its own operations, it feels no connection of motive and action: but as we know 'nothing more of causation than the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes.' The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is to voluntary action what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other: wherever this is the case necessity is clearly established.

The idea of liberty, applied metaphorically to the will, has sprung from a misconception of the meaning of the word power. What is power?—*id quod potest*, that which can produce any given effect. To deny power is to say that nothing can or has the power to be or act. In the only true sense of the word power, it applies with equal force to the lodestone as to the human will. Do you think these motives, which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight? The advocates of free-will assert that the will has the power of refusing to be determined by the strongest motive: but the strongest motive is that which, overcoming all others, ultimately prevails; this assertion therefore amounts to a denial of the will being ultimately determined by that motive which does determine it, which is absurd. But it is equally certain that a man cannot resist the strongest motive as that he cannot overcome a physical impossibility.

The doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality, and utterly to destroy religion. Reward and punishment must be considered, by the Necessarian, merely as motives which he would employ in order to procure the adoption or abandonment of any given line of conduct. Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under pretence of satisfying justice? It is not enough, says the advocate of free-will, that a criminal should be prevented from a repetition of his crime: he should feel pain, and his torments, when justly inflicted, ought precisely to be proportioned to his fault. But utility is morality; that which is incapable of producing happiness is useless; and though the crime of Damiens must be condemned, yet the frightful torments which revenge, under the name of justice, inflicted on this unhappy man cannot be supposed to have augmented, even at the long run, the stock of pleasurable sensation in the world. At the same time, the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice. The conviction which all feel that a viper is a poisonous animal, and that a tiger is constrained, by the inevitable condition of his existence, to devour men, does not induce us to avoid them less sedulously, or, even more, to hesitate in destroying them: but he would surely be of a hard heart who, meeting with a serpent on a desert island, or in a situation where it was incapable of injury, should wantonly deprive it of existence. A Necessarian is inconsequent to his own principles if he indulges in hatred or contempt; the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmixed with a desire of injuring him: he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes; whilst cowardice, curiosity, and inconsistency only assail him in proportion to the feebleness and indistinctness with which he has perceived and rejected the delusions of free-will.

Religion is the perception of the relation in which we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings is absolutely none. Without some insight into its will respecting our actions religion is nugatory and vain. But will is only a mode of animal mind; moral qualities also are such as only a human being can possess; to attribute them to the principle of the universe is to annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man, endowed with human qualities and governing the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. Their addresses to this imaginary being, indeed, are much in the same style as those of subjects to a king. They acknowledge his benevolence, deprecate his anger, and supplicate his favour.

But the doctrine of Necessity teaches us that in no case could any event have happened otherwise than it did happen, and that, if God is the author of good, He is also the author of evil; that, if He is entitled to our gratitude for the one, He is entitled to our hatred for the other; that, admitting the existence of this hypothetic being, He is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable necessity. It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light, and life, prove Him also to be the author of poison, darkness, and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny, are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty, and peace.

But we are taught, by the doctrine of Necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God will the doctrine of Necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment. God made man such as he is, and then damned him for being so: for to say that God was the author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity.

A Mahometan story, much to the present purpose, is recorded, wherein Adam and Moses are introduced disputing before God in the following manner. Thou, says Moses, art Adam, whom God created, and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshipped by the angels, and placed in Paradise, from whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault. Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for His apostle, and entrusted with His word, by giving thee the tables of the law, and whom He vouchsafed to admit to discourse with Himself. How many years dost thou find the law was written before I was created? Says Moses, Forty. And dost thou not find, replied Adam, these words therein, And Adam rebelled against his Lord and transgressed? Which Moses confessing, Dost thou therefore blame me, continued he, for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created, nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?—Sale's *Prelim. Disc. to the Koran*, p. 164.

VII. 13:—

There is no God.

This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit coeternal with the universe remains unshaken.

A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of belief.

When a proposition is offered to the mind, it perceives the agreement or disagreement of the ideas of which it is composed. A perception of their agreement is termed *belief*. Many obstacles frequently prevent this perception from being immediate; these the mind attempts to remove in order that the perception may be distinct. The mind is active in the investigation in order to perfect the state of perception of the relation which the component ideas of the proposition bear to each, which is passive: the investigation being confused with the perception has induced many falsely to imagine that the mind is active in belief,—that belief is an act of volition,—in consequence of which it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief; of which, in its nature, it is incapable: it is equally incapable of merit.

Belief, then, is a passion, the strength of which, like every other passion, is in precise proportion to the degrees of excitement.

The degrees of excitement are three.

The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.

The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.

The experience of others, which addresses itself to the former one, occupies the lowest degree.

(A graduated scale, on which should be marked the capabilities of propositions to approach to the test of the senses, would be a just barometer of the belief which ought to be attached to them.)

Consequently no testimony can be admitted which is contrary to reason; reason is founded on the evidence of our senses.

Every proof may be referred to one of these three divisions: it is to be considered what arguments we receive from each of them, which should convince us of the existence of a Deity.

1st, The evidence of the senses. If the Deity should appear to us, if He should convince our senses of His existence, this revelation would necessarily command belief. Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared have the strongest possible conviction of His existence. But the God of Theologians is incapable of local visibility.

2d, Reason. It is urged that man knows that whatever is must either have had a beginning, or have existed from all eternity: he also knows that whatever is not eternal must have had a cause. When this reasoning is applied to the universe, it is necessary to prove that it was created: until that is clearly demonstrated we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. We must prove design before we can infer a designer. The only idea which we can form of causation is derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is least incomprehensible;—it is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive a being beyond its limits capable of creating it: if the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

The other argument, which is founded on a man's knowledge of his own existence, stands thus. A man knows not only that he now is, but that once he was not; consequently there must have been a cause. But our idea of causation is alone derivable from the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other; and, reasoning experimentally, we can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. But there certainly is a generative power which is effected by certain instruments: we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments; nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration: we admit that the generative power is incomprehensible; but to suppose that the same effect is produced by an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent being leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

3d, Testimony. It is required that testimony should not be contrary to reason. The testimony that the Deity convinces the senses of men of His existence can only be admitted by us if our mind considers it less probable that these men should have been deceived than that the Deity should have appeared to them. Our reason can never admit the testimony of men, who not only declare that they were eye-witnesses of miracles, but that the Deity was irrational; for He commanded that He should be believed, He proposed the highest rewards for faith, eternal punishments for disbelief. We can only command voluntary actions; belief is not an act of volition; the mind is even passive, or involuntarily active; from this it is evident that we have no sufficient testimony, or rather that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God. It has been before shown that it cannot be deduced from reason. They alone, then, who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses can believe it.

Hence it is evident that, having no proofs from either of the three sources of conviction, the mind *cannot* believe the existence of a creative God: it is also evident that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.

God is an hypothesis, and, as such, stands in need of proof; the *onus probandi* rests on the theist. Sir Isaac Newton says: *Hypotheses non fingo, quicquid enim ex phaenomenis non deducitur hypothesis vocanda est, et hypothesis vel metaphysicae, vel physicae, vel qualitatum occultarum, seu mechanicae, in philosophia locum non habent.* To all proofs of the existence of a creative God apply this valuable rule. We see a variety of bodies possessing a variety of powers: we merely know their effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes. These Newton calls the phenomena of things; but the pride of philosophy is unwilling to admit its ignorance of their causes. From the phenomena, which are the objects of our senses, we attempt to infer a cause, which we call God, and gratuitously endow it with all negative and contradictory qualities. From this hypothesis we invent this general name, to conceal our ignorance of causes and essences. The being called God by no means answers with the conditions prescribed by Newton; it bears every mark of a veil woven by philosophical conceit, to hide the ignorance of philosophers even from themselves. They borrow the threads of its texture from the anthropomorphism of the vulgar. Words have been used by sophists for the same purposes, from the occult qualities of the peripatetics to the *effluvium* of Boyle and the *crinities* or *nebulae* of Herschel. God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; He is contained under every *predicate in non* that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even His worshippers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of Him: they exclaim with the French poet,

> *Pour dire ce qu'il est, il faut être lui-même.*

Lord Bacon says that atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and everything that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men: hence atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the boundaries of the present life.—Bacon's *Moral Essays.*

La première théologie de l'homme lui fit d'abord craindre et adorer les éléments même, des objets matériels et grossiers; il rendit ensuite ses hommages à des agents présidant aux éléments, à des génies inférieurs, à des héros, ou à des hommes doués de grandes qualités. A force de réfléchir il crut simplifier les choses en soumettant la nature entière à un seul agent, à un esprit, à une âme universelle, qui mettait cette nature et ses parties en mouvement. En remontant de causes en causes, les mortels ont fini par ne rien voir; et c'est dans cette obscurité qu'ils ont placé leur Dieu; c'est dans cet abîme ténébreux que leur imagination inquiète travaille toujours à se fabriquer des chimères, qui les affligeront jusqu'à ce que la connaissance de la nature les détrompe des fantômes qu'ils ont toujours si vainement adorés.

Si nous voulons nous rendre compte de nos idées sur la Divinité, nous serons obligés de convenir que, par le mot *Dieu*, les hommes n'ont jamais pu désigner que la cause la plus cachée, la plus éloignée, la plus inconnue des effets qu'ils voyaient: ils ne font usage de ce mot, que lorsque le jeu des causes naturelles et connues cesse d'être visible pour eux; dès qu'ils perdent le fil de ces causes, ou dès que leur esprit ne peut plus en suivre la chaîne, ils tranchent leur difficulté, et terminent leurs recherches en appellant Dieu la dernière des causes, c'est-à-dire celle qui est au-delà de toutes les causes qu'ils connaissent; ainsi ils ne font qu'assigner une dénomination vague à une cause ignorée, à laquelle leur paresse ou les bornes de leurs connaissances les forcent de s'arrêter. Toutes les fois qu'on nous dit que Dieu est l'auteur de quelque phénomène, cela signifie qu'on ignore comment un tel phénomène a pu s'opérer par le secours des forces ou des causes que nous connaissons dans la nature. C'est ainsi que le commun des hommes, dont l'ignorance est le partage, attribue à la Divinité non seulement les effets inusités qui les frappent, mais encore les évènemens les plus simples, dont les causes sont les plus faciles à connaître pour quiconque a pu les méditer. En un mot, l'homme a toujours respecté les causes inconnues des effets surprenans, que son ignorance l'empêchait de démêler. Ce fut sur les débris de la nature que les hommes élevèrent le colosse imaginaire de la Divinité.

Si l'ignorance de la nature donna la naissance aux dieux, la connaissance de la nature est faite pour les détruire. A mesure que l'homme s'instruit, ses forces et ses ressources augmentent avec ses lumières; les sciences, les arts conservateurs, l'industrie, lui fournissent des secours; l'expérience le rassure ou lui procure des moyens de résister aux efforts de bien des causes qui cessent de l'alarmer dès qu'il les a connues. En un mot, ses terreurs se dissipent dans la même proportion que son esprit s'éclaire. L'homme instruit cesse d'être superstitieux.

Ce n'est jamais que sur parole que des peuples entiers adorent le Dieu de leurs pères et de leurs prêtres: l'autorité, la confiance, la soumission, et l'habitude leur tiennent lieu de conviction et de preuves; ils se prosternent et prient, parce que leurs pères leur ont appris à se prosterner et prier: mais pourquoi ceux-ci se sont-ils mis à genoux? C'est que dans les temps éloignés leurs législateurs et leurs guides leur en ont fait un devoir. 'Adorez et croyez,' ont-ils dit, 'des dieux que vous ne pouvez comprendre; rapportez-vous-en à notre sagesse profonde; nous en savons plus que vous sur la divinité.' Mais pourquoi m'en rapporterais-je à vous? C'est que Dieu le veut ainsi, c'est que Dieu vous punira si vous osez résister. Mais ce Dieu n'est-il donc pas la chose en question? Cependant les hommes se sont toujours payés de ce cercle vicieux; la paresse de leur esprit leur fit trouver plus court de s'en rapporter au jugement des autres. Toutes les notions religieuses sont fondées uniquement sur l'autorité; toutes les religions du monde défendent l'examen et ne veulent pas que l'on raisonne; c'est l'autorité qui veut qu'on croie en Dieu; ce Dieu n'est lui-même fondé que sur l'autorité de quelques hommes qui prétendent le connaître, et venir de sa part pour l'annoncer à la terre. Un Dieu fait par les hommes a sans doute besoin des hommes pour se faire connaître aux hommes.

Ne serait-ce donc que pour des prêtres, des inspirés, des métaphysiciens que serait réservée la conviction de l'existence d'un Dieu, que l'on dit néanmoins si nécessaire à tout le genre humain? Mais trouvons-nous de l'harmonie entre les opinions théologiques des différens inspirés, ou des penseurs répandus sur la terre? Ceux même qui font profession d'adorer le même Dieu, sont-ils d'accord sur son compte? Sont-ils contents des preuves que leurs collègues apportent de son existence? Souscrivent-ils unanimement aux idées qu'ils présentent sur sa nature, sur sa conduite, sur la façon d'entendre ses prétendus oracles? Est-il une contrée sur la terre où la science de Dieu se soit réellement perfectionnée? A-t-elle pris quelque part la consistance et l'uniformité que nous voyons prendre aux connaissances humaines, aux arts les plus futiles, aux métiers les plus méprisés? Ces mots d'*esprit*, d'*immatérialité*, de *création*, de *prédestination*, de *grâce;* cette foule de distinctions subtiles dont la théologie s'est partout remplie dans quelques pays, ces inventions si ingénieuses, imaginées par des penseurs qui se sont succédés depuis tant de siècles, n'ont fait, hélas! qu'embrouiller les choses, et jamais la science la plus nécessaire aux hommes n'a jusqu'ici pu acquérir la moindre fixité. Depuis des milliers d'années ces rêveurs oisifs se sont perpétuellement relayés pour méditer la Divinité, pour deviner ses voies cachées, pour inventer des hypothèses propres à développer cette énigme importante. Leur peu de succès n'a point découragé la vanité théologique; toujours on a parlé de Dieu: on s'est égorgé pour lui, et cet être sublime demeure toujours le plus ignoré et le plus discuté.

Les hommes auraient été trop heureux, si, se bornant aux objets visibles qui les intéressent, ils eussent employé à perfectionner leurs sciences réelles, leurs lois, leur morale, leur éducation, la moitié des efforts qu'ils ont mis dans leurs recherches sur la Divinité. Ils auraient été bien plus sages encore, et plus fortunés, s'ils eussent pu consentir à laisser leurs guides désœuvrés se quereller entre eux, et sonder des profondeurs capables de les étourdir, sans se mêler de leurs disputes insensées. Mais il est de l'essence de l'ignorance d'attacher de l'importance à ce qu'elle ne comprend pas. La vanité humaine fait que l'esprit se roidit contre des difficultés. Plus un objet se dérobe à nos yeux, plus nous faisons d'efforts pour le saisir, parce que dès-lors il aiguillonne notre orgueil, il excite notre curiosité, il nous paraît intéressant. En combattant pour son Dieu chacun ne combattit en effet que pour les intérêts de sa propre vanité, qui de toutes les passions produites par la mal-organisation de la société est la plus prompte à s'alarmer, et la plus propre à produire de très grandes folies.

Si écartant pour un moment les idées fâcheuses que la théologie nous donne d'un Dieu capricieux, dont les décrets partiaux et despotiques décident du sort des humains, nous ne voulons fixer nos yeux que sur la bonté prétendue, que tous les hommes, même en tremblant devant ce Dieu, s'accordent à lui donner; si nous lui supposons le projet qu'on lui prête de n'avoir travaillé que pour sa propre gloire, d'exiger les hommages des êtres intelligens; de ne chercher dans ses œuvres que le bien-être du genre humain: comment concilier ces vues et ces dispositions avec l'ignorance vraiment invincible dans laquelle ce Dieu, si glorieux et si bon, laisse la plupart des hommes sur son compte? Si Dieu veut être connu, chéri, remercié, que ne se montre-t-il sous des traits favorables à tous ces êtres intelligens dont il veut être aimé et adoré? Pourquoi ne point se manifester à toute la terre d'une façon non équivoque, bien plus capable de nous convaincre que ces révélations particulières qui semblent accuser la Divinité d'une partialité fâcheuse pour quelques-unes de ses créatures? Le tout-puissant n'auroit-il donc pas des moyens plus convainquans de se montrer aux hommes que ces métamorphoses ridicules, ces incarnations prétendues, qui nous sont attestées par des écrivains si peu d'accord entre eux dans les récits qu'ils en font? Au lieu de tant de miracles, inventés pour prouver la mission divine de tant de législateurs révérés par les différens peuples du monde, le souverain des esprits ne pouvait-il pas convaincre tout d'un coup l'esprit humain des choses qu'il a voulu lui faire connaître? Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voûte du firmament; au lieu de répandre sans ordre les étoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace, n'eût-il pas été plus conforme aux vues d'un Dieu si jaloux de sa gloire et si bien-intentionné pour l'homme d'écrire, d'une façon non sujette à dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontés permanentes en caractères ineffaçables, et lisibles également pour tous les habitants de la terre? Personne alors n'aurait pu douter de l'existence d'un Dieu, de ses volontés claires, de ses intentions visibles. Sous les yeux de ce Dieu si terrible, personne n'aurait eu l'audace de violer ses ordonnances; nul mortel n'eût osé se mettre dans le cas d'attirer sa colère: enfin nul homme n'eût eu le front d'en imposer en son nom, ou d'interpréter ses volontés suivant ses propres fantaisies.

En effet, quand même on admettrait l'existence du Dieu théologique et la réalité des attributs si discordans qu'on lui donne, l'on n'en peut rien conclure, pour autoriser la conduite ou les cultes qu'on prescrit de lui rendre. La théologie est vraiment *le tonneau des Danaïdes*. A force de qualités contradictoires et d'assertions hasardées, elle a, pour ainsi dire, tellement garrotté son Dieu qu'elle l'a mis dans l'impossibilité d'agir. S'il est infiniment bon, quelle raison aurions-nous de le craindre? S'il est infiniment sage, de quoi nous inquiéter sur notre sort? S'il sait tout, pourquoi l'avertir de nos besoins, et le fatiguer de nos prières? S'il est partout, pourquoi lui élever des temples? S'il est maître de tout, pourquoi lui faire des sacrifices et des offrandes? S'il est juste, comment croire qu'il punisse des créatures qu'il a rempli de faiblesses? Si la grâce fait tout en elles, quelle raison aurait-il de les récompenser? S'il est tout-puissant, comment l'offenser, comment lui résister? S'il est raisonnable, comment se mettrait-il en colère contre des aveugles, à qui il a laissé la liberté de déraisonner? S'il est immuable, de quel droit prétendrions-nous faire changer ses décrets? S'il est inconcevable, pourquoi nous en occuper? S'IL A PARLÉ, POURQUOI L'UNIVERS N'EST-IL PAS CONVAINCU? Si la connaissance d'un Dieu est la plus nécessaire, pourquoi n'est-elle pas la plus évidente et la plus claire?—*Système de la Nature.* London, 1781.

The enlightened and benevolent Pliny thus publicly professes himself an atheist:—Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque quaerere imbecillitatis humanae reor. Quisquis est Deus (si modo est alius) et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus est visus, totus auditus, totus animae, totus animi, totus sui. . . . Imperfectae vero in homine naturae praecipua solatia ne deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitae poenis: nec mortales aeternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos; nec facere ut qui vixit non vixerit, qui honores gessit non gesserit, nullumque habere in praeteritum ius, praeterquam oblivionis, atque (ut facetis quoque argumentis societas haec cum deo copuletur) ut bis dena viginti non sint, et multa similiter efficere non posse.—Per quae declaratur haud dubie naturae potentiam id quoque esse quod Deum vocamus.—Plin. *Nat. Hist.* cap. de Deo.

The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist. See Sir W. Drummond's *Academical Questions*, chap. iii. —Sir W. seems to consider the atheism

to which it leads as a sufficient presumption of the falsehood of the system of gravitation; but surely it is more consistent with the good faith of philosophy to admit a deduction from facts than an hypothesis incapable of proof, although it might militate with the obstinate preconceptions of the mob. Had this author, instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood, his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic and the toleration of the philosopher.

Omnia enim per Dei potentiam facta sunt: imo quia naturae potentia nulla est nisi ipsa Dei potentia. Certum est nos eatenus Dei potentiam non intelligere, quatenus causas naturales ignoramus; adeoque stulte ad eandem Dei potentiam recurritur, quando rei alicuius causam naturalem, sive est, ipsam Dei potentiam ignoramus.—Spinosa, *Tract. Theologico-Pol.* chap. i, p. 14.

VII. 67:—

Ahasuerus, rise!

'Ahasuerus the Jew crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of His ponderous cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove Him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, "Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of man: be it denied thee also, until He comes to judge the world."

'A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now from country to country; he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

'Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel—he shook the dust from his beard—and taking up one of the skulls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. "This was my father!" roared Ahasuerus. Seven more skulls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with ghastly looks, exclaimed—"And these were my wives!" He still continued to hurl down skull after skull, roaring in dreadful accents—"And these, and these, and these were my children! They *could die*; but I! reprobate wretch! alas! I cannot die! Dreadful beyond conception is the judgement that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell—I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans—but, alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair,—and I could not die!

'"Rome the giantess fell—I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell and did not crush me. Nations sprang up and disappeared before me;—but I remained and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount's sulphureous mouth—ah! ten long months. The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture-snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist.—A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them.—I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my skull: balls in vain hissed upon me: the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins: in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air—I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner's hand could not strangle me, the tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon.—The serpent stung, but could not destroy me. The dragon tormented, but dared not to devour me.—I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Christiern, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Muley Ismail, 'Thou art a bloodhound!'—The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me.———Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die—not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to [be]hold for millenniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyaena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring!—Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful Avenger in Heaven, hast Thou in Thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? then let it thunder upon me, command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant, and writhe, and die!"'

This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, whose title I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

VII. 135, 136:—

I will beget a Son, and He shall bear
The sins of all the world.

A book is put into our hands when children, called the Bible, the purport of whose history is briefly this: That God made the earth in six days, and there planted a delightful garden, in which He placed the first pair of human beings. In the midst of the garden He planted a tree, whose fruit, although within their reach, they were forbidden to touch. That the Devil, in the shape of a snake, persuaded them to eat of this fruit; in consequence of which God condemned both them and their posterity yet unborn to satisfy His justice by their eternal misery. That, four thousand years after these events (the human race in the meanwhile having gone unredeemed to perdition), God engendered with the betrothed wife of a carpenter in Judea (whose virginity was nevertheless uninjured), and begat a son, whose name was Jesus Christ; and who was crucified and died, in order that no more men might be devoted to hell-fire, He bearing the burthen of His Father's displeasure by proxy. The book states, in addition, that the soul of whoever disbelieves this sacrifice will be burned with everlasting fire.

During many ages of misery and darkness this story gained implicit belief; but at length men arose who suspected that it was a fable and imposture, and that Jesus Christ, so far from being a God, was only a man like themselves. But a numerous set of men, who derived and still derive immense emoluments from this opinion, in the shape of a popular belief, told the vulgar that if they did not believe in the Bible they would be damned to all eternity; and burned, imprisoned, and poisoned all the unbiassed and unconnected inquirers who occasionally arose. They still oppress them, so far as the people, now become more enlightened, will allow.

The belief in all that the Bible contains is called Christianity. A Roman governor of Judea, at the instance of a priest-led mob, crucified a man called Jesus eighteen centuries ago. He was a man of pure life, who desired to rescue his countrymen from the tyranny of their barbarous and degrading superstitions. The common fate of all who desire to benefit mankind awaited him. The rabble, at the instigation of the priests, demanded his death, although his very judge made public acknowledgement of his innocence. Jesus was sacrificed to the honour of that God with whom he was afterwards confounded. It is of importance, therefore, to distinguish between the pretended character of this being as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and his real character as a man, who, for a vain attempt to reform the world, paid the forfeit of his life to that overbearing tyranny which has since so long desolated the universe in his name. Whilst the one is a hypocritical Daemon, who announces Himself as the God of compassion and peace, even whilst He stretches forth His blood-red hand with the sword of discord to waste the earth, having confessedly devised this scheme of desolation from eternity; the other stands in the foremost list of those true heroes who have died in the glorious martyrdom of liberty, and have braved torture, contempt, and poverty in the cause of suffering humanity[1].

The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded that the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.

Christianity is now the established religion: he who attempts to impugn it must be contented to behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion; though, if his genius be equal to his courage, and assisted by a peculiar coalition of circumstances, future ages may exalt him to a divinity, and persecute others in his name, as he was persecuted in the name of his predecessor in the homage of the world.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. The blood shed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of His religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe. We derive from our ancestors a faith thus fostered and supported: we quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Even under a government which, whilst it infringes the very right of thought and speech, boasts of permitting the liberty of the press, a man is pilloried and imprisoned because he is a deist, and no one raises his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity. But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission; and a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than in that of his aggressor who, daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator by that torture and imprisonment whose infliction he could command.

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[1] Since writing this note I have some reason to suspect that Jesus was an ambitious man, who aspired to the throne of Judea.

Analogy seems to favour the opinion that as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity, it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.

Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the preceding analogy would be inadmissible. We should never speculate on the future obsoleteness of a system perfectly conformable to nature and reason: it would endure so long as they endured; it would be a truth as indisputable as the light of the sun, the criminality of murder, and other facts, whose evidence, depending on our organization and relative situations, must remain acknowledged as satisfactory so long as man is man. It is an incontrovertible fact, the consideration of which ought to repress the hasty conclusions of credulity, or moderate its obstinacy in maintaining them, that, had the Jews not been a fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion never could have prevailed, it could not even have existed: on so feeble a thread hangs the most cherished opinion of a sixth of the human race! When will the vulgar learn humility? When will the pride of ignorance blush at having believed before it could comprehend?

Either the Christian religion is true, or it is false: if true, it comes from God, and its authenticity can admit of doubt and dispute no further than its omnipotent author is willing to allow. Either the power or the goodness of God is called in question, if He leaves those doctrines most essential to the well-being of man in doubt and dispute; the only ones which, since their promulgation, have been the subject of unceasing cavil, the cause of irreconcilable hatred. *If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?*

There is this passage in the Christian Scriptures: 'Those who obey not God, and believe not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punished with everlasting destruction.' This is the pivot upon which all religions turn: they all assume that it is in our power to believe or not to believe; whereas the mind can only believe that which it thinks true. A human being can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is utterly distinct from and unconnected with volition: it is the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas that compose any proposition. Belief is a passion, or involuntary operation of the mind, and, like other passions, its intensity is precisely proportionate to the degrees of excitement. Volition is essential to merit or demerit. But the Christian religion attaches the highest possible degrees of merit and demerit to that which is worthy of neither, and which is totally unconnected with the peculiar faculty of the mind, whose presence is essential to their being.

Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an all-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates, to this age, to have been utterly unsuccessful.

Christianity inculcates the necessity of supplicating the Deity. Prayer may be considered under two points of view;—as an endeavour to change the intentions of God, or as a formal testimony of our obedience. But the former case supposes that the caprices of a limited intelligence can occasionally instruct the Creator of the world how to regulate the universe; and the latter, a certain degree of servility analogous to the loyalty demanded by earthly tyrants. Obedience indeed is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks that he can do something better than reason.

Christianity, like all other religions, rests upon miracles, prophecies, and martyrdoms. No religion ever existed which had not its prophets, its attested miracles, and, above all, crowds of devotees who would bear patiently the most horrible tortures to prove its authenticity. It should appear that in no case can a discriminating mind subscribe to the genuineness of a miracle. A miracle is an infraction of nature's law, by a supernatural cause; by a cause acting beyond that eternal circle within which all things are included. God breaks through the law of nature, that He may convince mankind of the truth of that revelation which, in spite of His precautions, has been, since its introduction, the subject of unceasing schism and cavil.

Miracles resolve themselves into the following question[1]:—Whether it is more probable the laws of nature, hitherto so immutably harmonious, should have undergone violation, or that a man should have told a lie? Whether it is more probable that we are ignorant of the natural cause of an event, or that we know the supernatural one? That, in old times, when the powers of nature were less known than at present, a certain set of men were themselves deceived, or had some hidden motive for deceiving others; or that God begat a Son, who, in His legislation, measuring merit by belief, evidenced Himself to be totally ignorant of the powers of the human mind—of what is voluntary, and what is the contrary?

We have many instances of men telling lies;—none of an infraction of nature's laws, those laws of whose government alone we have any knowledge or experience. The records of all nations afford innumerable instances of men deceiving others either from vanity or interest, or themselves being deceived by the limitedness of their views and their ignorance of natural causes: but where is the accredited case of God having come upon earth, to give the lie to His own creations? There would be something truly wonderful in the appearance of a ghost; but the assertion of a child that he saw one as he passed through the churchyard is universally admitted to be less miraculous.

But even supposing that a man should raise a dead body to life before our eyes, and on this fact rest his claim to being considered the son of God;—the Humane Society restores drowned persons, and because it makes no mystery of the method it employs, its members are not mistaken for the sons of God. All that we have a right to infer from our ignorance of the cause of any event is that we do not know it: had the Mexicans attended to this simple rule when they heard the cannon of the Spaniards, they would not have considered them as gods: the experiments of modern chemistry would have defied the wisest philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome to have accounted for them on natural principles. An author of strong common sense has observed that 'a miracle is no miracle at second-hand'; he might have added that a miracle is no miracle in any case; for until we are acquainted with all natural causes, we have no reason to imagine others.

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[1] See Hume's *Essay*, vol. ii. p. 121.

There remains to be considered another proof of Christianity—Prophecy. A book is written before a certain event, in which this event is foretold; how could the prophet have foreknown it without inspiration? how could he have been inspired without God? The greatest stress is laid on the prophecies of Moses and Hosea on the dispersion of the Jews, and that of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah. The prophecy of Moses is a collection of every possible cursing and blessing; and it is so far from being marvellous that the one of dispersion should have been fulfilled, that it would have been more surprising if, out of all these, none should have taken effect. In Deuteronomy, chap. xxviii. ver. 64, where Moses explicitly foretells the dispersion, he states that they shall there serve gods of wood and stone: 'And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other; *and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even gods of wood and stone.*' The Jews are at this day remarkably tenacious of their religion. Moses also declares that they shall be subjected to these curses for disobedience to his ritual: 'And it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all the commandments and statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.' Is this the real reason? The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of Hosea are a piece of immodest confession. The indelicate type might apply in a hundred senses to a hundred things. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is more explicit, yet it does not exceed in clearness the oracles of Delphos. The historical proof that Moses, Isaiah, and Hosea did write when they are said to have written is far from being clear and circumstantial.

But prophecy requires proof in its character as a miracle; we have no right to suppose that a man foreknew future events from God, until it is demonstrated that he neither could know them by his own exertions, nor that the writings which contain the prediction could possibly have been fabricated after the event pretended to be foretold. It is more probable that writings, pretending to divine inspiration, should have been fabricated after the fulfilment of their pretended prediction than that they should have really been divinely inspired, when we consider that the latter supposition makes God at once the creator of the human mind and ignorant of its primary powers, particularly as we have numberless instances of false religions, and forged prophecies of things long past, and no accredited case of God having conversed with men directly or indirectly. It is also possible that the description of an event might have foregone its occurrence; but this is far from being a legitimate proof of a divine revelation, as many men, not pretending to the character of a prophet, have nevertheless, in this sense, prophesied.

Lord Chesterfield was never yet taken for a prophet, even by a bishop, yet he uttered this remarkable prediction: 'The despotic government of

France is screwed up to the highest pitch; a revolution is fast approaching; that revolution, I am convinced, will be radical and sanguinary.' This appeared in the letters of the prophet long before the accomplishment of this wonderful prediction. Now, have these particulars come to pass, or have they not? If they have, how could the Earl have foreknown them without inspiration? If we admit the truth of the Christian religion on testimony such as this, we must admit, on the same strength of evidence, that God has affixed the highest rewards to belief, and the eternal tortures of the never-dying worm to disbelief, both of which have been demonstrated to be involuntary.

The last proof of the Christian religion depends on the influence of the Holy Ghost. Theologians divide the influence of the Holy Ghost into its ordinary and extraordinary modes of operation. The latter is supposed to be that which inspired the Prophets and Apostles; and the former to be the grace of God, which summarily makes known the truth of His revelation to those whose mind is fitted for its reception by a submissive perusal of His word. Persons convinced in this manner can do anything but account for their conviction, describe the time at which it happened, or the manner in which it came upon them. It is supposed to enter the mind by other channels than those of the senses, and therefore professes to be superior to reason founded on their experience.

Admitting, however, the usefulness or possibility of a divine revelation, unless we demolish the foundations of all human knowledge, it is requisite that our reason should previously demonstrate its genuineness; for, before we extinguish the steady ray of reason and common sense, it is fit that we should discover whether we cannot do without their assistance, whether or no there be any other which may suffice to guide us through the labyrinth of life[1]: for, if a man is to be inspired upon all occasions, if he is to be sure of a thing because he is sure, if the ordinary operations of the Spirit are not to be considered very extraordinary modes of demonstration, if enthusiasm is to usurp the place of proof, and madness that of sanity, all reasoning is superfluous. The Mahometan dies fighting for his prophet, the Indian immolates himself at the chariot-wheels of Brahma, the Hottentot worships an insect, the Negro a bunch of feathers, the Mexican sacrifices human victims! Their degree of conviction must certainly be very strong: it cannot arise from reasoning, it must from feelings, the reward of their prayers. If each of these should affirm, in opposition to the strongest possible arguments, that inspiration carried internal evidence, I fear their inspired brethren, the orthodox missionaries, would be so uncharitable as to pronounce them obstinate.

Miracles cannot be received as testimonies of a disputed fact, because all human testimony has ever been insufficient to establish the possibility of miracles. That which is incapable of proof itself is no proof of anything else. Prophecy has also been rejected by the test of reason. Those, then, who have been actually inspired are the only true believers in the Christian religion.

> Mox numine viso
> Virginei tumuere sinus, innuptaque mater
> Arcano stupuit compleri viscera partu,
> Auctorem paritura suum. Mortalia corda
> Artificem texere poli, latuitque sub uno
> Pectore, qui totum late complectitur orbem.
>
> Claudian, *Carmen Paschale.*

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[1] See Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, book iv. chap. xix, on Enthusiasm.

Does not so monstrous and disgusting an absurdity carry its own infamy and refutation with itself?

VIII. 203–207:—

Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing
Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Draws on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, etc.

Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our mind. Vivid sensation, of either pain or pleasure, makes the time seem long, as the common phrase is, because it renders us more acutely conscious of our ideas. If a mind be conscious of an hundred ideas during one minute, by the clock, and of two hundred during another, the latter of these spaces would actually occupy so much greater extent in the mind as two exceed one in quantity. If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is indefinite. One man is stretched on the rack during twelve hours; another sleeps soundly in his bed: the difference of time perceived by these two persons is immense; one hardly will believe that half an hour has elapsed, the other could credit that centuries had flown during his agony. Thus, the life of a man of virtue and talent, who should die in his thirtieth year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dulness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties, has rendered himself master of his thoughts, can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business;—the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise.

Dark flood of time!
Roll as it listeth thee—I measure not
By months or moments thy ambiguous course.
Another may stand by me on the brink
And watch the bubble whirled beyond his ken
That pauses at my feet. The sense of love,
The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought
Prolong my being: if I wake no more,
My life more actual living will contain
Than some gray veteran's of the world's cold school,
Whose listless hours unprofitably roll,
By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed.

See Godwin's *Pol. Jus.* vol. i, p. 411; and Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*, époque ix.

VIII. 211, 212:—

No longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face.

I hold that the depravity of the physical and moral nature of man originated in his unnatural habits of life. The origin of man, like that of the universe of which he is a part, is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. His generations either had a beginning, or they had not. The weight of evidence in favour of each of these suppositions seems tolerably equal; and it is perfectly unimportant to the present argument which is assumed. The language spoken, however, by the mythology of nearly all religions seems to prove that at some distant period man forsook the path of nature, and sacrificed the purity and happiness of his being to unnatural appetites. The date of this event seems to have also been that of some great change in the climates of the earth, with which it has an obvious correspondence. The allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil, and entailing upon their posterity the wrath of God and the loss of everlasting life, admits of no other explanation than the disease and crime that have flowed from unnatural diet. Milton was so well aware of this that he makes Raphael thus exhibit to Adam the consequence of his disobedience :—

> Immediately a place
> Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark ;
> A lazar-house it seemed ; wherein were laid
> Numbers of all diseased—all maladies
> Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
> Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
> Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
> Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
> Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
> And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
> Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
> Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.

And how many thousands more might not be added to this frightful catalogue !

The story of Prometheus is one likewise which, although universally admitted to be allegorical, has never been satisfactorily explained. Prometheus stole fire from heaven, and was chained for this crime to Mount Caucasus, where a vulture continually devoured his liver, that grew to meet its hunger. Hesiod says that, before the time of Prometheus, mankind were exempt from suffering ; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth, and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep, and gently closed their eyes. Again, so general was this opinion that Horace, a poet of the Augustan age, writes—

> Audax omnia perpeti,
> Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas ;
> Audax Iapeti genus
> Ignem fraude malâ gentibus intulit :
> Post ignem aetheriâ domo
> Subductum, macies et nova febrium
> Terris incubuit cohors,
> Semotique prius tarda necessitas
> Lethi corripuit gradum.

How plain a language is spoken by all this ! Prometheus (who represents the human race) effected some great change in the condition of his nature, and applied fire to culinary purposes ; thus inventing an expedient for screening from his disgust the horrors of the shambles. From this moment his vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease. It consumed his being in every shape of its loathsome and infinite variety, inducing the soul-quelling sinkings of premature and violent death. All vice rose from the ruin of healthful innocence. Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality were then first known, when reason vainly attempted to guide the wanderings of exacerbated passion. I conclude this part of the subject with an extract from Mr. Newton's *Defence of Vegetable Regimen*, from whom I have borrowed this interpretation of the fable of Prometheus.

'Making allowance for such transposition of the events of the allegory as time might produce after the important truths were forgotten, which this portion of the ancient mythology was intended to transmit, the drift of the fable seems to be this :—Man at his creation was endowed with the gift of perpetual youth ; that is, he was not formed to be a sickly suffering creature as we now see him, but to enjoy health, and to sink by slow degrees into the bosom of his parent earth without disease or pain. Prometheus first taught the use of animal food (primus bovem occidit Prometheus[1]) and of fire, with which to render it more digestible and pleasing to the taste. Jupiter, and the rest of the gods, foreseeing the consequences of these inventions, were amused or irritated at the short-sighted devices of the newly-formed creature, and left him to experience the sad effects of them. Thirst, the necessary concomitant of a flesh diet' (perhaps of all diet vitiated by culinary preparation), 'ensued; water was resorted to, and man forfeited the inestimable gift of health which he had received from heaven: he became diseased, the partaker of a precarious existence, and no longer descended slowly to his grave[2].'

But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And every death its own avenger breeds;
The fury passions from that blood began,
And turned on man a fiercer savage—man.

Man, and the animals whom he has infected with his society, or depraved by his dominion, are alone diseased. The wild hog, the mouflon, the bison, and the wolf, are perfectly exempt from malady, and invariably die either from external violence or natural old age. But the domestic hog, the sheep, the cow, and the dog, are subject to an incredible variety of distempers; and, like the corrupters of their nature, have physicians who thrive upon their miseries. The supereminence of man is like Satan's, a supereminence of pain; and the majority of his species, doomed to penury, disease, and crime, have reason to curse the untoward event that, by enabling him to communicate his sensations, raised him above the level of his fellow-animals. But the steps that have been taken are irrevocable. The whole of human science is comprised in one question:—How can the advantages of intellect and civilization be reconciled with the liberty and pure pleasures of natural life? How can we take the benefits and reject the evils of the system, which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being?—I believe that abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors would in a great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question.

It is true that mental and bodily derangement is attributable in part to other deviations from rectitude and nature than those which concern diet. The mistakes cherished by society respecting the connection of the sexes, whence the misery and diseases of unsatisfied celibacy, unenjoying prostitution, and the premature arrival of puberty, necessarily spring; the putrid atmosphere of crowded cities; the exhalations of chemical processes; the muffling of our bodies in superfluous apparel; the absurd treatment of infants:—all these and innumerable other causes contribute their mite to the mass of human evil.

Comparative anatomy teaches us that man resembles frugivorous animals in everything, and carnivorous in nothing; he has neither claws wherewith to seize his prey, nor distinct and pointed teeth to tear the living fibre. A Mandarin of the first class, with nails two inches long, would probably find them alone inefficient to hold even a hare. After every subterfuge of gluttony, the bull must be degraded into the ox, and the ram into the wether, by an unnatural and inhuman operation, that the flaccid fibre may offer a fainter resistance to rebellious nature. It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion; and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust. Let the advocate of animal food force himself to a decisive experiment on its fitness, and, as Plutarch recommends, tear a living lamb with his teeth, and plunging his head into its vitals slake his thirst with the steaming blood; when fresh from the deed of horror, let him revert to the irresistible instincts of nature that would rise in judgement against it, and say, 'Nature formed me for such work as this.' Then, and then only, would he be consistent.

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[1] Plin. *Nat. Hist.* lib. vii. sect. 57.

[2] *Return to Nature.* Cadell, 1811.

Man resembles no carnivorous animal. There is no exception, unless man be one, to the rule of herbivorous animals having cellulated colons.

The orang-outang perfectly resembles man both in the order and number of his teeth. The orang-outang is the most anthropomorphous of the ape tribe, all of which are strictly frugivorous. There is no other species of animals, which live on different food, in which this analogy exists[1]. In many frugivorous animals, the canine teeth are more pointed and distinct than those of man. The resemblance also of the human stomach to that of the orang-outang is greater than to that of any other animal.

The intestines are also identical with those of herbivorous animals, which present a larger surface for absorption and have ample and cellulated colons. The caecum also, though short, is larger than that of carnivorous animals; and even here the orang-outang retains its accustomed similarity.

The structure of the human frame, then, is that of one fitted to a pure vegetable diet, in every essential particular. It is true that the reluctance to abstain from animal food, in those who have been long accustomed to its stimulus, is so great in some persons of weak minds as to be scarcely overcome; but this is far from bringing any argument in its favour. A lamb, which was fed for some time on flesh by a ship's crew, refused its natural diet at the end of the voyage. There are numerous instances of horses, sheep, oxen, and even wood-pigeons, having been taught to live upon flesh, until they have loathed their natural aliment. Young children evidently prefer pastry, oranges, apples, and other fruit, to the flesh of animals; until, by the gradual depravation of the digestive organs, the free use of vegetables has for a time produced serious inconveniences; *for a time*, I say, since there never was an instance wherein a change from spirituous liquors and animal food to vegetables and pure water has failed ultimately to invigorate the body, by rendering its juices bland and consentaneous, and to restore to the mind that cheerfulness and elasticity which not one in fifty possesses on the present system. A love of strong liquors is also with difficulty taught to infants. Almost every one remembers the wry faces which the first glass of port produced. Unsophisticated instinct is invariably unerring; but to decide on the fitness of animal food from the perverted appetites which its constrained adoption produces, is to make the criminal a judge in his own cause: it is even worse, it is appealing to the infatuated drunkard in a question of the salubrity of brandy.

What is the cause of morbid action in the animal system? Not the air we breathe, for our fellow-denizens of nature breathe the same uninjured; not the water we drink (if remote from the pollutions of man and his inventions[1]), for the animals drink it too; not the earth we tread upon; not the unobscured sight of glorious nature, in the wood, the field, or the expanse of sky and ocean; nothing that we are or do in common with the undiseased inhabitants of the forest. Something, then, wherein we differ from them: our habit of altering our food by fire, so that our appetite is no longer a just criterion for the fitness of its gratification. Except in children, there remain no traces of that instinct which determines, in all other animals, what aliment is natural or otherwise; and so perfectly obliterated are they in the reasoning adults of our species, that it has become necessary to urge considerations drawn from comparative anatomy to prove that we are naturally frugivorous.

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[1] Cuvier, *Leçons d'Anat. Comp.* tom. iii, pp. 169, 373, 448, 465, 480. Rees's *Cyclopaedia*, art. Man.

Crime is madness. Madness is disease. Whenever the cause of disease shall be discovered, the root, from which all vice and misery have so long overshadowed the globe, will lie bare to the axe. All the exertions of man, from that moment, may be considered as tending to the clear profit of his species. No sane mind in a sane body resolves upon a real crime. It is a man of violent passions, bloodshot eyes, and swollen veins, that alone can grasp the knife of murder. The system of a simple diet promises no Utopian advantages. It is no mere reform of legislation, whilst the furious passions and evil propensities of the human heart, in which it had its origin, are still unassuaged. It strikes at the root of all evil, and is an experiment which may be tried with success, not alone by nations, but by small societies, families, and even individuals. In no cases has a return to vegetable diet produced the slightest injury; in most it has been attended with changes undeniably beneficial. Should ever a physician be born with the genius of Locke, I am persuaded that he might trace all bodily and mental derangements to our unnatural habits, as clearly as that philosopher has traced all knowledge to sensation. What prolific sources of disease are not those mineral and vegetable poisons that have been introduced for its extirpation! How many thousands have become murderers and robbers, bigots and domestic tyrants, dissolute and abandoned adventurers, from the use of fermented liquors; who, had they slaked their thirst only with pure water, would have lived but to diffuse the happiness of their own unperverted feelings! How many groundless opinions and absurd institutions have not received a general sanction from the sottishness and intemperance of individuals! Who will assert that, had the populace of Paris satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature, they would have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscription-list of Robespierre? Could a set of men, whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli, look with coolness on an *auto da fé*? Is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings, rising from his meal of roots, would take delight in sports of blood? Was Nero a man of temperate life? could you read calm health in his cheek, flushed with ungovernable propensities of hatred for the human race? Did Muley Ismael's pulse beat evenly, was his skin transparent, did his eyes beam with healthfulness, and its invariable concomitants, cheerfulness and benignity? Though history has decided none of these questions, a child could not hesitate to answer in the negative. Surely the bile-suffused cheek of Buonaparte, his wrinkled brow, and yellow eye, the ceaseless inquietude of his nervous system, speak no less plainly the character of his unresting ambition than his murders and his victories. It is impossible, had Buonaparte descended from a race of vegetable feeders, that he could have had either the inclination or the power to ascend the throne of the Bourbons. The desire of tyranny could scarcely be excited in the individual, the power to tyrannize would certainly not be delegated by a society neither frenzied by inebriation nor rendered impotent and irrational by disease. Pregnant indeed with inexhaustible calamity is the renunciation of instinct, as it concerns our physical nature; arithmetic cannot enumerate, nor reason perhaps suspect, the multitudinous sources of disease in civilized life. Even common water, that apparently innoxious pabulum, when corrupted by the filth of populous cities, is a deadly and insidious destroyer[1]. Who can wonder that all the inducements held out by God Himself in the Bible to virtue should have been vainer than a nurse's tale; and that those dogmas, by which He has there excited and justified the most ferocious propensities, should have alone been deemed essential; whilst Christians are in the daily practice of all those habits which have infected with disease and crime, not only the reprobate sons, but these favoured children of the common Father's love? Omnipotence itself could not save them from the consequences of this original and universal sin.

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[1] The necessity of resorting to some means of purifying water, and the disease which arises from its adulteration in civilized countries, is sufficiently apparent. See Dr. Lambe's *Reports on Cancer*. I do not assert that the use of water is in itself unnatural, but that the unperverted palate would swallow no liquid capable of occasioning disease.

There is no disease, bodily or mental, which adoption of vegetable diet and pure water has not infallibly mitigated, wherever the experiment has been fairly tried. Debility is gradually converted into strength; disease into healthfulness; madness, in all its hideous variety, from the ravings of the fettered maniac to the unaccountable irrationalities of ill-temper, that make a hell of domestic life, into a calm and considerate evenness of temper, that alone might offer a certain pledge of the future moral reformation of society. On a natural system of diet, old age would be our last and our only malady; the term of our existence would be protracted; we should enjoy life, and no longer preclude others from the enjoyment of it; all sensational delights would be infinitely more exquisite and perfect; the very sense of being would then be a continued pleasure, such as we now feel it in some few and favoured moments of our youth. By all that is sacred in our hopes for the human race, I conjure those who love happiness and truth to give a fair trial to the vegetable system. Reasoning is surely superfluous on a subject whose merits an experience of six months would set for ever at rest. But it is only among the enlightened and benevolent that so great a sacrifice of appetite and prejudice can be expected, even though its ultimate excellence should not admit of dispute. It is found easier, by the short-sighted victims of disease, to palliate their torments by medicine than to prevent them by regimen. The vulgar of all ranks are invariably sensual and indocile; yet I cannot but feel myself persuaded that when the benefits of vegetable diet are mathematically proved, when it is as clear that those who live naturally are exempt from premature death as that nine is not one, the most sottish of mankind will feel a preference towards a long and tranquil, contrasted with a short and painful, life. On the average, out of sixty persons four die in three years. Hopes are entertained that, in April, 1814, a statement will be given that sixty persons, all having lived more than three years on vegetables and pure water, are then *in perfect health.* More than two years have now elapsed; *not one of them has died*; no such example will be found in any sixty persons taken at random. Seventeen persons of all ages (the families of Dr. Lambe and Mr. Newton) have lived for seven years on this diet without a death, and almost without the slightest illness. Surely, when we consider that some of these were infants, and one a martyr to asthma now nearly subdued, we may challenge any seventeen persons taken at random in this city to exhibit a parallel case. Those who may have been excited to question the rectitude of established habits of diet by these loose remarks, should consult Mr. Newton's luminous and eloquent essay[1].

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[1] Lambe's *Reports on Cancer*.

When these proofs come fairly before the world, and are clearly seen by all who understand arithmetic, it is scarcely possible that abstinence from aliments demonstrably pernicious should not become universal. In proportion to the number of proselytes, so will be the weight of evidence; and when a thousand persons can be produced, living on vegetables and distilled water, who have to dread no disease but old age, the world will be compelled to regard animal flesh and fermented liquors as slow but certain poisons. The change which would be produced by simpler habits on political economy is sufficiently remarkable. The monopolizing eater of animal flesh would no longer destroy his constitution by devouring an acre at a meal, and many loaves of bread would cease to contribute to gout, madness and apoplexy, in the shape of a pint of porter, or a dram of gin, when appeasing the long-protracted famine of the hard-working peasant's hungry babes. The quantity of nutritious vegetable matter, consumed in fattening the carcase of an ox, would afford ten times the sustenance, undepraving indeed, and incapable of generating disease, if gathered immediately from the bosom of the earth. The most fertile districts of the habitable globe are now actually cultivated by men for animals, at a delay and waste of aliment absolutely incapable of calculation. It is only the wealthy that can, to any great degree, even now, indulge the unnatural craving for dead flesh, and they pay for the greater licence of the privilege by subjection to supernumerary diseases. Again, the spirit of the nation that should take the lead in this great reform would insensibly become agricultural; commerce, with all its vice, selfishness, and corruption, would gradually decline; more natural habits would produce gentler manners, and the excessive complication of political relations would be so far simplified that every individual might feel and understand why he loved his country, and took a personal interest in its welfare. How would England, for example, depend on the caprices of foreign rulers if she contained within herself all the necessaries, and despised whatever they possessed of the luxuries, of life? How could they starve her into compliance with their views? Of what consequence would it be that they refused to take her woollen manufactures, when large and fertile tracts of the island ceased to be allotted to the waste of pasturage? On a natural system of diet we should require no spices from India; no wines from Portugal, Spain, France, or Madeira; none of those multitudinous articles of luxury, for which every corner of the globe is rifled, and which are the causes of so much individual rivalship, such calamitous and sanguinary national disputes. In the history of modern times, the avarice of commercial monopoly, no less than the ambition of weak and wicked chiefs, seems to have fomented the universal discord, to have added stubbornness to the mistakes of cabinets, and indocility to the infatuation of the people. Let it ever be remembered that it is the direct influence of commerce to make the interval between the richest and the poorest man wider and more unconquerable. Let it be remembered that it is a foe to everything of real worth and excellence in the human character. The odious and disgusting aristocracy of wealth is built upon the ruins of all that is good in chivalry or republicanism; and luxury is the forerunner of a barbarism scarce capable of cure. Is it impossible to realize a state of society, where all the energies of man shall be directed to the production of his solid happiness? Certainly, if this advantage (the object of all political speculation) be in any degree attainable, it is attainable only by a community which holds out no factitious incentives to the avarice and ambition of the few, and which is internally organized for the liberty, security, and comfort of the many. None must be entrusted with power (and money is the completest species of power) who do not stand pledged to use it exclusively for the general benefit. But the use of animal flesh and fermented liquors directly militates with this equality of the rights of man. The peasant cannot gratify these fashionable cravings without leaving his family to starve. Without disease and war, those sweeping curtailers of population, pasturage would include a waste too great to be afforded. The labour requisite to support a family is far lighter[1] than is usually supposed. The peasantry work, not only for themselves, but for the aristocracy, the army, and the manufacturers.

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[1] *Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Regimen.* Cadell, 1811.

The advantage of a reform in diet is obviously greater than that of any other. It strikes at the root of the evil. To remedy the abuses of legislation, before we annihilate the propensities by which they are produced, is to suppose that by taking away the effect the cause will cease to operate. But the efficacy of this system depends entirely on the proselytism of individuals, and grounds its merits, as a benefit to the community, upon the total change of the dietetic habits in its members. It proceeds securely from a number of particular cases to one that is universal, and has this advantage over the contrary mode, that one error does not invalidate all that has gone before.

Let not too much, however, be expected from this system. The healthiest among us is not exempt from hereditary disease. The most symmetrical, athletic, and longlived is a being inexpressibly inferior to what he would have been, had not the unnatural habits of his ancestors accumulated for him a certain portion of malady and deformity. In the most perfect specimen of civilized man, something is still found wanting by the physiological critic. Can a return to nature, then, instantaneously eradicate predispositions that have been slowly taking root in the silence of innumerable ages?—Indubitably not. All that I contend for is, that from the moment of the relinquishing all unnatural habits no new disease is generated; and that the predisposition to hereditary maladies gradually perishes, for want of its accustomed supply. In cases of consumption, cancer, gout, asthma, and scrofula, such is the invariable tendency of a diet of vegetables and pure water.

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[1] It has come under the author's experience that some of the workmen on an embankment in North Wales, who, in consequence of the inability of the proprietor to pay them, seldom received their wages, have supported large families by cultivating small spots of sterile ground by moonlight. In the notes to Pratt's poem, *Bread, or the Poor*, is an account of an industrious labourer who, by working in a small garden, before and after his day's task, attained to an enviable state of independence.

Those who may be induced by these remarks to give the vegetable system a fair trial, should, in the first place, date the commencement of their practice from the moment of their conviction. All depends upon breaking through a pernicious habit resolutely and at once. Dr. Trotter[1] asserts that no drunkard was ever reformed by gradually relinquishing his dram. Animal flesh, in its effects on the human stomach, is analogous to a dram. It is similar in the kind, though differing in the degree, of its operation. The proselyte to a pure diet must be warned to expect a temporary diminution of muscular strength. The subtraction of a powerful stimulus will suffice to account for this event. But it is only temporary, and is succeeded by an equable capability for exertion, far surpassing his former various and fluctuating strength. Above all, he will acquire an easiness of breathing, by which such exertion is performed, with a remarkable exemption from that painful and difficult panting now felt by almost every one after hastily climbing an ordinary mountain. He will be equally capable of bodily exertion, or mental application, after as before his simple meal. He will feel none of the narcotic effects of ordinary diet. Irritability, the direct consequence of exhausting stimuli, would yield to the power of natural and tranquil impulses. He will no longer pine under the lethargy of ennui, that unconquerable weariness of life, more to be dreaded than death itself. He will escape the epidemic madness, which broods over its own injurious notions of the Deity, and 'realizes the hell that priests and beldams feign.' Every man forms, as it were, his god from his own character; to the divinity of one of simple habits no offering would be more acceptable than the happiness of his creatures. He would be incapable of hating or persecuting others for the love of God. He will find, moreover, a system of simple diet to be a system of perfect epicurism. He will no longer be incessantly occupied in blunting and destroying those organs from which he expects his gratification. The pleasures of taste to be derived from a dinner of potatoes, beans, peas, turnips, lettuces, with a dessert of apples, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, raspberries, and in winter, oranges, apples and pears, is far greater than is supposed. Those who wait until they can eat this plain fare with the sauce of appetite will scarcely join with the hypocritical sensualist at a lord-mayor's feast, who declaims against the pleasures of the table. Solomon kept a thousand concubines, and owned in despair that all was vanity. The man whose happiness is constituted by the society of one amiable woman would find some difficulty in sympathizing with the disappointment of this venerable debauchee.

I address myself not only to the young enthusiast, the ardent devotee of truth and virtue, the pure and passionate moralist, yet unvitiated by the contagion of the world. He will embrace a pure system, from its abstract truth, its beauty, its simplicity, and its promise of wide-extended benefit; unless custom has turned poison into food, he will hate the brutal pleasures of the chase by instinct; it will be a contemplation full of horror, and disappointment to his mind, that beings capable of the gentlest and most admirable sympathies should take delight in the death-pangs and last convulsions of dying animals. The elderly man, whose youth has been poisoned by intemperance, or who has lived with apparent moderation, and is afflicted with a variety of painful maladies, would find his account in a beneficial change produced without the risk of poisonous medicines. The mother, to whom the perpetual restlessness of disease and unaccountable deaths incident to her children are the causes of incurable unhappiness, would on this diet experience the satisfaction of beholding their perpetual healths and natural playfulness[1]. The most valuable lives are daily destroyed by diseases that it is dangerous to palliate and impossible to cure by medicine. How much longer will man continue to pimp for the gluttony of Death, his most insidious, implacable, and eternal foe?

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[1] See Trotter on the Nervous Temperament.

Ἀλλὰ δράκοντας ἀγρίους καλεῖτε καὶ παρδάλεις καὶ λέοντας, αὐτοὶ δὲ μιαιφονεῖτε εἰς ὠμότητα καταλιπόντες ἐκείνοις οὐδέν· ἐκείνοις μὲν γὰρ ὁ φόνος τροφή, ὑμῖν δὲ ὄψον ἐστίν. . . . Ὅτι γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ φύσιν τὸ σαρκοφαγεῖν, πρῶτον μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων δηλοῦται τῆς κατασκευῆς. Οὐδενὶ γὰρ ἔοικε τὸ ἀνθρώπου σῶμα τῶν ἐπὶ σαρκοφαγίᾳ γεγονότων, οὐ γρυπότης χείλους, οὐκ ὀξύτης ὄνυχος, οὐ τραχύτης ὀδόντος πρόσεστιν, οὐ κοιλίας εὐτονία καὶ πνεύματος θερμότης, τρέψαι καὶ κατεργάσασθαι δυνατὴ τὸ βαρὺ καὶ κρεῶδες· ἀλλ᾽ αὐτόθεν ἡ φύσις τῇ λειότητι τῶν ὀδόντων καὶ τῇ σμικρότητι τοῦ στόματος καὶ τῇ μαλακότητι τῆς γλώσσης καὶ τῇ πρὸς πέψιν ἀμβλύτητι τοῦ πνεύματος, ἐξόμνυται τὴν σαρκοφαγίαν. Εἰ δὲ λέγεις πεφυκέναι σεαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοιαύτην ἐδωδήν, ὃ βούλει φαγεῖν πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἀπόκτεινον, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς διὰ σεαυτοῦ, μὴ χρησάμενος κοπίδι μηδὲ τυμπάνῳ τινὶ μηδὲ πελέκει· ἀλλά, ὡς λύκοι καὶ ἄρκτοι καὶ λέοντες αὐτοὶ ὅσα ἐσθίουσι φονεύουσιν, ἄνελε δήγματι βοῦν ἢ στόματι σῦν, ἢ ἄρνα ἢ λαγωὸν διάρρηξον καὶ φάγε προσπεσὼν ἔτι ζῶντος, ὡς ἐκεῖνα. . . . Ἡμεῖς δ᾽ οὕτως ἐν τῷ μιαιφόνῳ τρυφῶμεν, ὥστ᾽ ὄψον τὸ κρέας προσαγορεύομεν, εἶτ᾽ ὄψων πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ κρέας δεόμεθα, ἀναμιγνύντες ἔλαιον οἶνον μέλι γάρον ὄξος ἡδύσμασι Συριακοῖς Ἀραβικοῖς, ὥσπερ ὄντως νεκρὸν ἐνταφιάζοντες. Καὶ γὰρ οὕτως αὐτῶν διαλυθέντων καὶ μαλαχθέντων καὶ τρόπον τινὰ προσαπέντων ἔργον ἐστὶ τὴν πέψιν κρατῆσαι, καὶ διακρατηθείσης δὲ δεινὰς βαρύτητας ἐμποιεῖ καὶ νοσώδεις ἀπεψίας. . . . Οὕτω τὸ πρῶτον ἄγριόν τι ζῷον ἐβρώθη καὶ κακοῦργον, εἶτ᾽ ὄρνις τις ἢ ἰχθὺς εἵλκυστο· καὶ γευσάμενον οὕτω καὶ προμελετῆσαν ἐν ἐκείνοις τὸ φονικὸν ἐπὶ βοῦν ἐργάτην ἦλθε καὶ τὸ κόσμιον πρόβατον καὶ τὸν οἰκουρὸν ἀλεκτρυόνα· καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν οὕτω τὴν ἀπληστίαν στομώσαντες ἐπὶ σφαγὰς ἀνθρώπων καὶ πολέμους καὶ φόνους προῆλθον.—Πλούτ. περὶ τῆς Σαρκοφαγίας.

NOTE ON QUEEN MAB, BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY was eighteen when he wrote *Queen Mab*; he never published it. When it was written, he had come to the decision that he was too young to be a 'judge of controversies'; and he was desirous of acquiring 'that sobriety of spirit which is the characteristic of true heroism.' But he never doubted the truth or utility of his opinions; and, in printing and privately distributing *Queen Mab*, he believed that he should further their dissemination, without occasioning the mischief either to others or himself that might arise from publication. It is doubtful whether he would himself have admitted it into a collection of his works. His severe classical taste, refined by the constant study of the Greek poets, might have discovered defects that escape the ordinary reader; and the change his opinions underwent in many points would have prevented him from putting forth the speculations of his boyish days. But the poem is too beautiful in itself, and far too remarkable as the production of a boy of eighteen, to allow of its being passed over: besides that, having been frequently reprinted, the omission would be vain. In the former edition certain portions were left out, as shocking the general reader from the violence of their attack on religion. I myself had a painful feeling that such erasures might be looked upon as a mark of disrespect towards the author, and am glad to have the opportunity of restoring them. The notes also are reprinted entire—not because they are models of reasoning or lessons of truth, but because Shelley wrote them, and that all that a man at once so distinguished and so excellent ever did deserves to be preserved. The alterations his opinions underwent ought to be recorded, for they form his history.

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[1] See Mr. Newton's book. His children are the most beautiful and healthy creatures it is possible to conceive; the girls are perfect models for a sculptor; their dispositions are also the most gentle and conciliating; the judicious treatment, which they experience in other points, may be a correlative cause of this. In the first five years of their life, of 18,000 children that are born, 7,500 die of various diseases; and how many more of those that survive are not rendered miserable by maladies not immediately mortal? The quality and quantity of a woman's milk are materially injured by the use of dead flesh. In an island near Iceland, where no vegetables are to be got, the children invariably die of tetanus before they are three weeks old, and the population is supplied from the mainland.—Sir G. Mackenzie's *Hist. of Iceland.* See also *Émile*, chap. i, pp. 53, 54, 56.

A series of articles was published in the *New Monthly Magazine* during the autumn of the year 1832, written by a man of great talent, a fellow-collegian and warm friend of Shelley: they describe admirably the state of his mind during his collegiate life. Inspired with ardour for the acquisition of knowledge, endowed with the keenest sensibility and with the fortitude of a martyr, Shelley came among his fellow-creatures, congregated for the purposes of education, like a spirit from another sphere; too delicately organized for the rough treatment man uses towards man, especially in the season of youth, and too resolute in carrying out his own sense of good and justice, not to become a victim. To a devoted attachment to those he loved he added a determined resistance to oppression. Refusing to fag at Eton, he was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys: this roused instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience when it was enforced by menaces and punishment. To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them when collected together in societies, where one egged-on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion; while the attachment he felt for individuals, and the admiration with which he regarded their powers and their virtues, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of human nature; and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions and excuse evil actions.

The oppression which, trembling at every nerve yet resolute to heroism, it was his ill-fortune to encounter at school and at college, led him to dissent in all things from those whose arguments were blows, whose faith appeared to engender blame and hatred. 'During my existence,' he wrote to a friend in 1812, 'I have incessantly speculated, thought, and read.' His readings were not always well chosen; among them were the works of the French philosophers: as far as metaphysical argument went, he temporarily became a convert. At the same time, it was the cardinal article of his faith that, if men were but taught and induced to treat their fellows with love, charity, and equal rights, this earth would realize paradise. He looked upon religion, as it is professed, and above all practised, as hostile instead of friendly to the cultivation of those virtues which would make men brothers.

Can this be wondered at? At the age of seventeen, fragile in health and frame, of the purest habits in morals, full of devoted generosity and universal kindness, glowing with ardour to attain wisdom, resolved at every personal sacrifice to do right, burning with a desire for affection and sympathy,—he was treated as a reprobate, cast forth as a criminal.

The cause was that he was sincere; that he believed the opinions which he entertained to be true. And he loved truth with a martyr's love; he was ready to sacrifice station and fortune, and his dearest affections, at its shrine. The sacrifice was demanded from, and made by, a youth of seventeen. It is a singular fact in the history of society in the civilized nations of modern times that no false step is so irretrievable as one made in early youth. Older men, it is true, when they oppose their fellows and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them. But youth is rash; nor can it imagine, while asserting what it believes to be true, and doing what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious, and pursued as a criminal.

Shelley possessed a quality of mind which experience has shown me to be of the rarest occurrence among human beings: this was his *unworldliness.* The usual motives that rule men, prospects of present or future advantage, the rank and fortune of those around, the taunts and censures, or the praise, of those who were hostile to him, had no influence whatever over his actions, and apparently none over his thoughts. It is difficult even to express the simplicity and directness of purpose that adorned him. Some few might be found in the history of mankind, and some one at least among his own friends, equally disinterested and scornful, even to severe personal sacrifices, of every baser motive. But no one, I believe, ever joined this noble but passive virtue to equal active endeavours for the benefit of his friends and mankind in general, and to equal power to produce the advantages he desired. The world's brightest gauds and its most solid advantages were of no worth in his eyes, when compared to the cause of what he considered truth, and the good of his fellow-creatures. Born in a position which, to his inexperienced mind, afforded the greatest facilities to practise the tenets he espoused, he boldly declared the use he would make of fortune and station, and enjoyed the belief that he should materially benefit his fellow-creatures by his actions; while, conscious of surpassing powers of reason and imagination, it is not strange that he should, even while so young, have believed that his written thoughts would tend to disseminate opinions which he believed conducive to the happiness of the human race.

If man were a creature devoid of passion, he might have said and done all this with quietness. But he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills he witnessed, not to scorn danger. Various disappointments tortured, but could not tame, his soul. The more enmity he met, the more earnestly he became attached to his peculiar views, and hostile to those of the men who persecuted him.

He was animated to greater zeal by compassion for his fellow-creatures. His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is burning. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to create a brotherhood of property and service, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of his birth. He was of too uncompromising a disposition to join any party. He did not in his youth look forward to gradual improvement: nay, in those days of intolerance, now almost forgotten, it seemed as easy to look forward to the sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood which he thought the proper state of mankind as to the present reign of moderation and improvement. Ill-health made him believe that his race would soon be run; that a year or two was all he had of life. He desired that these years should be useful and illustrious. He saw, in a fervent call on his fellow-creatures to share alike the blessings of the creation, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted him. In this spirit he composed *Queen Mab*.

He was a lover of the wonderful and wild in literature, but had not fostered these tastes at their genuine sources—the romances and chivalry of the middle ages—but in the perusal of such German works as were current in those days. Under the influence of these he, at the age of fifteen, wrote two short prose romances of slender merit. The sentiments and language were exaggerated, the composition imitative and poor. He wrote also a poem on the subject of Ahasuerus—being led to it by a German fragment he picked up, dirty and torn, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. This fell afterwards into other hands, and was considerably altered before it was printed. Our earlier English poetry was almost unknown to him. The love and knowledge of Nature developed by Wordsworth—the lofty melody and mysterious beauty of Coleridge's poetry—and the wild fantastic machinery and gorgeous scenery adopted by Southey—composed his favourite reading; the rhythm of *Queen Mab* was founded on that of *Thalaba*, and the first few lines bear a striking resemblance in spirit, though not in idea, to the opening of that poem. His fertile imagination, and ear tuned to the finest sense of harmony, preserved him from imitation. Another of his favourite books was the poem of *Gebir* by Walter Savage Landor. From his boyhood he had a wonderful facility of versification, which he carried into another language; and his Latin school-verses were composed with an ease and correctness that procured for him prizes, and caused him to be resorted to by all his friends for help. He was, at the period of writing *Queen Mab*, a great traveller within the limits of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His time was spent among the loveliest scenes of these countries. Mountain and lake and forest were his home; the phenomena of Nature were his favourite study. He loved to inquire into their causes, and was addicted to pursuits of natural philosophy and chemistry, as far as they could be carried on as an amusement. These tastes gave truth and vivacity to his descriptions, and warmed his soul with that deep admiration for the wonders of Nature which constant association with her inspired.

He never intended to publish *Queen Mab* as it stands; but a few years after, when printing *Alastor*, he extracted a small portion which he entitled *The Daemon of the World*. In this he changed somewhat the versification, and made other alterations scarcely to be called improvements.

Some years after, when in Italy, a bookseller published an edition of *Queen Mab* as it originally stood. Shelley was hastily written to by his friends, under the idea that, deeply injurious as the mere distribution of the poem had proved, the publication might awaken fresh persecutions. At the suggestion of these friends he wrote a letter on the subject, printed in the *Examiner* newspaper—with which I close this history of his earliest work.

To THE EDITOR OF THE 'EXAMINER.'

'SIR,

'Having heard that a poem entitled *Queen Mab* has been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair, as it relates to me.

'A poem entitled *Queen Mab* was written by me at the age of eighteen, I daresay in a sufficiently intemperate spirit—but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off, to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years. I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that, in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom. I have directed my solicitor to apply to Chancery for an injunction to restrain the sale; but, after the precedent of Mr. Southey's *Wat Tyler* (a poem written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm), with little hope of success.

'Whilst I exonerate myself from all share in having divulged opinions hostile to existing sanctions, under the form, whatever it may be, which they assume in this poem, it is scarcely necessary for me to protest against the system of inculcating the truth of Christianity or the excellence of Monarchy, however true or however excellent they may be, by such equivocal arguments as confiscation and imprisonment, and invective and slander, and the insolent violation of the most sacred ties of Nature and society.

'Sir,
'I am your obliged and obedient servant,
'Percy B. Shelley.
'*Pisa, June* 22, 1821.'

[Of the following pieces the *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, the Poems from *St. Irvyne, or The Rosicrucian*, *The Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* and *The Devil's Walk*, were published by Shelley himself; the others by Medwin, Rossetti, Forman and Dowden, as indicated in the several prefatory notes.]

VERSES ON A CAT

[Published by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1800.]

I

A cat in distress,
Nothing more, nor less;
Good folks, I must faithfully tell ye,
As I am a sinner,
It waits for some dinner
To stuff out its own little belly.

II

You would not easily guess
All the modes of distress
Which torture the tenants of earth;
And the various evils,
Which like so many devils,
Attend the poor souls from their birth.

III

Some a living require,
And others desire
An old fellow out of the way;
And which is the best
I leave to be guessed,
For I cannot pretend to say.

IV

One wants society,
Another variety,
Others a tranquil life;
Some want food,
Others, as good,
Only want a wife.

V

But this poor little cat
Only wanted a rat,

To stuff out its own little maw;
And it were as good
Some people had such food,
To make them *hold their jaw!*

FRAGMENT: OMENS

[Published by Medwin, *Shelley Papers*, 1833; dated 1807.]

Hark! the owlet flaps his wings
In the pathless dell beneath;
Hark! 'tis the night-raven sings
Tidings of approaching death.

EPITAPHIUM

[Latin Version of the Epitaph in Gray's Elegy.]

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847; dated 1808–9.]

I

Hic sinu fessum caput hospitali
Cespitis dormit juvenis, nec illi
Fata ridebant, popularis ille
Nescius aurae.

II

Musa non vultu genus arroganti
Rustica natum grege despicata,
Et suum tristis puerum notavit
Sollicitudo.

III

Indoles illi bene larga, pectus
Veritas sedem sibi vindicavit,
Et pari tantis meritis beavit
Munere coelum.

IV

Omne quod moestis habuit miserto
Corde largivit lacrimam, recepit
Omne quod coelo voluit, fidelis
Pectus amici.

V

Longius sed tu fuge curiosus
Caeteras laudes fuge suspicari,
Caeteras culpas fuge velle tractas
Sede tremenda.

VI

Spe tremescentes recubant in illa
Sede virtutes pariterque culpae,
In sui Patris gremio, tremenda
Sede Deique.

IN HOROLOGIUM

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847; dated 1809.]

Inter marmoreas Leonorae pendula colles
Fortunata nimis Machina dicit horas.
Quas *manibus* premit illa duas insensa papillas
Cur mihi sit *digito* tangere, amata, nefas?

A DIALOGUE

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1809. Included in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

Death.

For my dagger is bathed in the blood of the brave,
I come, care-worn tenant of life, from the grave,
Where Innocence sleeps 'neath the peace-giving sod,
And the good cease to tremble at Tyranny's nod;
I offer a calm habitation to thee,—
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me?
My mansion is damp, cold silence is there,
But it lulls in oblivion the fiends of despair;
Not a groan of regret, not a sigh, not a breath,
Dares dispute with grim Silence the empire of Death.
I offer a calm habitation to thee,—
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me?

Mortal.

Mine eyelids are heavy; my soul seeks repose,
It longs in thy cells to embosom its woes,
It longs in thy cells to deposit its load,
Where no longer the scorpions of Perfidy goad,—

Where the phantoms of Prejudice vanish away,
And Bigotry's bloodhounds lose scent of their prey.
Yet tell me, dark Death, when thine empire is o'er,
What awaits on Futurity's mist-covered shore?

Death.

Cease, cease, wayward Mortal! I dare not unveil
The shadows that float o'er Eternity's vale;
Nought waits for the good but a spirit of Love,
That will hail their blest advent to regions above.
For Love, Mortal, gleams through the gloom of my sway,
And the shades which surround me fly fast at its ray.
Hast thou loved?—Then depart from these regions of hate,
And in slumber with me blunt the arrows of fate.
I offer a calm habitation to thee,—
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me?

Mortal.

Oh! sweet is thy slumber! oh! sweet is the ray
Which after thy night introduces the day;
How concealed, how persuasive, self-interest's breath,
Though it floats to mine ear from the bosom of Death!
I hoped that I quite was forgotten by all,
Yet a lingering friend might be grieved at my fall,
And duty forbids, though I languish to die,
When departure might heave Virtue's breast with a sigh.
O Death! O my friend! snatch this form to thy shrine,
And I fear, dear destroyer, I shall not repine.

TO THE MOONBEAM

[Published by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1809. Included in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

I

Moonbeam, leave the shadowy vale,
To bathe this burning brow.
Moonbeam, why art thou so pale,
As thou walkest o'er the dewy dale,
Where humble wild-flowers grow?
Is it to mimic me?
But that can never be;
For thine orb is bright,
And the clouds are light,
That at intervals shadow the star-studded night.

II

Now all is deathy still on earth;
Nature's tired frame reposes;
And, ere the golden morning's birth
Its radiant hues discloses,
Flies forth its balmy breath.
But mine is the midnight of Death,
And Nature's morn
To my bosom forlorn
Brings but a gloomier night, implants a deadlier thorn.

III

Wretch! Suppress the glare of madness
Struggling in thine haggard eye,
For the keenest throb of sadness,
Pale Despair's most sickening sigh,
Is but to mimic me;
And this must ever be,
When the twilight of care,
And the night of despair,
Seem in my breast but joys to the pangs that rankle there.

THE SOLITARY

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; dated 1810. Included in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

I

Dar'st thou amid the varied multitude
To live alone, an isolated thing?

A Dialogue—22 o'er *Esdaile MS.*; on *1858*.
To the Moonbeam—28 rankle *Esdaile MS.*; wake *1858*.

To see the busy beings round thee spring,
And care for none; in thy calm solitude,
A flower that scarce breathes in the desert rude
To Zephyr's passing wing?

II

Not the swart Pariah in some Indian grove,
Lone, lean, and hunted by his brother's hate,
Hath drunk so deep the cup of bitter fate
As that poor wretch who cannot, cannot love:
He bears a load which nothing can remove,
A killing, withering weight.

III

He smiles—'tis sorrow's deadliest mockery;
He speaks—the cold words flow not from his soul;
He acts like others, drains the genial bowl,—
Yet, yet he longs—although he fears—to die;
He pants to reach what yet he seems to fly,
Dull life's extremest goal.

TO DEATH

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1810. Included (under the title, *To Death*) in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

DEATH! where is thy victory?
To triumph whilst I die,
To triumph whilst thine ebon wing
Enfolds my shuddering soul?
O Death! where is thy sting?
Not when the tides of murder roll,
When nations groan, that kings may bask in bliss,
Death! canst thou boast a victory such as this—
When in his hour of pomp and power
His blow the mightiest murderer gave,
Mid Nature's cries the sacrifice
Of millions to glut the grave;
When sunk the Tyrant Desolation's slave;
Or Freedom's life-blood streamed upon thy shrine;
Stern Tyrant, couldst thou boast a victory such as mine?

To know in dissolution's void
That mortals' baubles sunk decay;
That everything, but Love, destroyed
Must perish with its kindred clay,—
Perish Ambition's crown,
Perish her sceptred sway;
From Death's pale front fades Pride's fastidious frown.
In Death's damp vault the lurid fires decay,
That Envy lights at heaven-born Virtue's beam—
That all the cares subside,
Which lurk beneath the tide
Of life's unquiet stream;—
Yes! this is victory!
And on yon rock, whose dark form glooms the sky,
To stretch these pale limbs, when the soul is fled;
To baffle the lean passions of their prey,
To sleep within the palace of the dead!
Oh! not the King, around whose dazzling throne
His countless courtiers mock the words they say,
Triumphs amid the bud of glory blown,
As I in this cold bed, and faint expiring groan!

Tremble, ye proud, whose grandeur mocks the woe
Which props the column of unnatural state!
You the plainings, faint and low,
From Misery's tortured soul that flow,
Shall usher to your fate.

To Death—10 murderer *Esdaile MS.*; murders *1858*.

Tremble, ye conquerors, at whose fell command
The war-fiend riots o'er a peaceful land!
You Desolation's gory throng
Shall bear from Victory along
To that mysterious strand.

. . . . . .

LOVE'S ROSE

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1810. Included in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

I

Hopes, that swell in youthful breasts,
Live not through the waste of time!
Love's rose a host of thorns invests;
Cold, ungenial is the clime,
Where its honours blow.
Youth says, 'The purple flowers are mine,'
Which die the while they glow.

II

Dear the boon to Fancy given,
Retracted whilst it's granted:
Sweet the rose which lives in Heaven,
Although on earth 'tis planted,
Where its honours blow,
While by earth's slaves the leaves are riven
Which die the while they glow.

III

Age cannot Love destroy,
But perfidy can blast the flower,
Even when in most unwary hour
It blooms in Fancy's bower.
Age cannot Love destroy,
But perfidy can rend the shrine
In which its vermeil splendours shine.

EYES: A FRAGMENT

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; dated 1810. Included (four unpublished eight-line stanzas) in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

How eloquent are eyes!
Not the rapt poet's frenzied lay
When the soul's wildest feelings stray
Can speak so well as they.
How eloquent are eyes!
Not music's most impassioned note
On which Love's warmest fervours float
Like them bids rapture rise.

Love, look thus again,—
That your look may light a waste of years,
Darting the beam that conquers cares
Through the cold shower of tears.
Love, look thus again!

. . . . .

ORIGINAL POETRY
BY VICTOR AND CAZIRE

[Published by Shelley, 1810. A Reprint, edited by Richard Garnett, C.B., LL.D., was issued by John Lane, in 1898. The punctuation of the original edition is here retained.]

A Person complained that whenever he began to write, he never could arrange his ideas in grammatical order. Which occasion suggested the idea of the following lines:

I

Here I sit with my paper, my pen and my ink,
First of this thing, and that thing, and t'other thing think;
Then my thoughts come so pell-mell all into my mind,
That the sense or the subject I never can find:
This word is wrong placed,—no regard to the sense,
The present and future, instead of past tense,
Then my grammar I want; O dear! what a bore,
I think I shall never attempt to write more,
With patience I then my thoughts must arraign,

Love's Rose—The title is Rossetti's, 1870. 2 not through *Esdaile MS.*; they this, *1858.*

Have them all in due order like mutes in a train,
Like them too must wait in due patience and thought,
Or else my fine works will all come to nought.
My wit too's so copious, it flows like a river,
But disperses its waters on black and white never;
Like smoke it appears independent and free,
But ah luckless smoke! it all passes like thee—
Then at length all my patience entirely lost,
My paper and pens in the fire are tossed;
But come, try again—you must never despair,
Our Murray's or Entick's are not all so rare,
Implore their assistance—they'll come to your aid,
Perform all your business without being paid,
They'll tell you the present tense, future and past,
Which should come first, and which should come last,
This Murray will do—then to Entick repair,
To find out the meaning of any word rare.
This they friendly will tell, and ne'er make you blush,
With a jeering look, taunt, or an O fie! tush!
Then straight all your thoughts in black and white put,
Not minding the if's, the be's, and the but,
Then read it all over, see how it will run,
How answers the wit, the retort, and the pun,
Your writings may then with old Socrates vie,
May on the same shelf with Demosthenes lie,
May as Junius be sharp, or as Plato be sage,
The pattern or satire to all of the age;
But stop—a mad author I mean not to turn,
Nor with thirst of applause does my heated brain burn,
Sufficient that sense, wit, and grammar combined,
My letters may make some slight food for the mind;
That my thoughts to my friends I may freely impart,
In all the warm language that flows from the heart,
Hark! futurity calls! it loudly complains,
It bids me step forward and just hold the reins,
My excuse shall be humble, and faithful, and true,
Such as I fear can be made but by few—
Of writers this age has abundance and plenty,
Three score and a thousand, two millions and twenty,
Three score of them wits who all sharply vie,
To try what odd creature they best can belie,
A thousand are prudes who for *Charity* write,
And fill up their sheets with spleen, envy, and spite[,]
One million are bards, who to Heaven aspire,
And stuff their works full of bombast, rant, and fire,
T'other million are wags who in Grub-street attend,
And just like a cobbler the old writings mend,
The twenty are those who for pulpits indite,
And pore over sermons all Saturday night.
And now my good friends—who come after I mean,
As I ne'er wore a cassock, or dined with a dean,
Or like cobblers at mending I never did try,
Nor with poets in lyrics attempted to vie;

As for prudes these good souls I both hate and detest,
So here I believe the matter must rest.—
I've heard your complaint—my answer I've made,
And since to your calls all the tribute I've paid,
Adieu my good friend; pray never despair,
But grammar and sense and everything dare,
Attempt but to write dashing, easy, and free,
Then take out your grammar and pay him his fee,
Be not a coward, shrink not to a tense,
But read it all over and make it out sense.
What a tiresome girl!—pray soon make an end,
Else my limited patience you'll quickly expend.
Well adieu, I no longer your patience will try—
So swift to the post now the letter shall fly.

JANUARY, 1810.

II

To MISS —— —— [HARRIET GROVE]

FROM MISS —— —— [ELIZABETH SHELLEY]

FOR your letter, dear —— [Hattie], accept my best thanks,
Rendered long and amusing by virtue of franks,
Though concise they would please, yet the longer the better,
The more news that's crammed in, more amusing the letter,
All excuses of etiquette nonsense I hate,
Which only are fit for the tardy and late,
As when converse grows flat, of the weather they talk,
How fair the sun shines—a fine day for a walk,
Then to politics turn, of Burdett's reformation,
One declares it would hurt, t'other better the nation,
Will ministers keep? sure they've acted quite wrong,
The burden this is of each morning-call song.
So —— is going to —— you say,
I hope that success her great efforts will pay [——]
That [the Colonel] will see her, be dazzled outright,
And declare he can't bear to be out of her sight.
Write flaming epistles with love's pointed dart,
Whose sharp little arrow struck right on his heart,
Scold poor innocent Cupid for mischievous ways,
He knows not how much to laud forth her praise,
That he neither eats, drinks or sleeps for her sake,
And hopes her hard heart some compassion will take,
A refusal would kill him, so desperate his flame,
But he fears, for he knows she is not common game,
Then praises her sense, wit, discernment and grace,
He's not one that's caught by a sly looking face,
Yet that's *too* divine—such a black sparkling eye,
At the bare glance of which near a thousand will die;
Thus runs he on meaning but one word in ten,
More than is meant by most such kind of men,
For they're all alike, take them one with another,
Begging pardon—with the exception of my brother.
Of the drawings you mention much praise I have heard,
Most opinion's the same, with the difference of word,

19 mischievous] mischevious *1810*.

Some get a good name by the voice of the crowd,
Whilst to poor humble merit small praise is allowed,
As in parliament votes, so in pictures a name,
Oft determines a fate at the altar of fame.—
So on Friday this City's gay vortex you quit,
And no longer with Doctors and Johnny cats sit—
Now your parcel 's arrived —— [Bysshe's] letter shall go,
I hope all your joy mayn't be turned into woe,
Experience will tell you that pleasure is vain,
When it promises sunshine how often comes rain.
So when to fond hope every blessing is nigh,
How oft when we smile it is checked with a sigh,
When Hope, gay deceiver, in pleasure is dressed,
How oft comes a stroke that may rob us of rest.
When we think ourselves safe, and the goal near at hand,
Like a vessel just landing, we're wrecked near the strand,
And though memory forever the sharp pang must feel,
'Tis our duty to bear, and our hardship to steel—
May misfortunes dear Girl, ne'er thy happiness cloy,
May thy days glide in peace, love, comfort and joy,
May thy tears with soft pity for other woes flow,
Woes, which thy tender heart never may know,
For hardships our own, God has taught us to bear,
Though sympathy's soul to a friend drops a tear.
Oh dear! what sentimental stuff have I written,
Only fit to tear up and play with a kitten.
What sober reflections in the midst of this letter!
Jocularity sure would have suited much better;
But there are exceptions to all common rules,
For this is a truth by all boys learned at schools.
Now adieu my dear —— [Hattie] I'm sure I must tire,
For if I do, you may throw it into the fire,
So accept the best love of your cousin and friend,
Which brings this nonsensical rhyme to an end.

April 30, 1810.

III. SONG

Cold, cold is the blast when December is howling,
Cold are the damps on a dying man's brow,—
Stern are the seas when the wild waves are rolling,
And sad is the grave where a loved one lies low;
But colder is scorn from the being who loved thee,
More stern is the sneer from the friend who has proved thee,
More sad are the tears when their sorrows have moved thee,
Which mixed with groans anguish and wild madness flow—
And ah! poor —— has felt all this horror,
Full long the fallen victim contended with fate:
'Till a destitute outcast abandoned to sorrow,
She sought her babe's food at her ruiner's gate—
Another had charmed the remorseless betrayer,
He turned laughing aside from her moans and her prayer,
She said nothing, but wringing the wet from her hair,
Crossed the dark mountain side, though the hour it was late.

'Twas on the wild height of the dark Penmanmawr,
That the form of the wasted —— reclined;
She shrieked to the ravens that croaked from afar,
And she sighed to the gusts of the wild sweeping wind.—
'I call not yon rocks where the thunder peals rattle,
I call not yon clouds where the elements battle,
But thee, cruel —— I call thee unkind!'—

Then she wreathed in her hair the wild flowers of the mountain,
And deliriously laughing, a garland entwined,
She bedewed it with tears, then she hung o'er the fountain,
And leaving it, cast it a prey to the wind.
'Ah! go,' she exclaimed, 'when the tempest is yelling,
'Tis unkind to be cast on the sea that is swelling,
But I left, a pitiless outcast, my dwelling,
My garments are torn, so they say is my mind—'

Not long lived ——, but over her grave
Waved the desolate form of a storm-blasted yew,
Around it no demons or ghosts dare to rave,
But spirits of peace steep her slumbers in dew.
Then stay thy swift steps mid the dark mountain heather,
Though chill blow the wind and severe is the weather,
For perfidy, traveller! cannot bereave her,
Of the tears, to the tombs of the innocent due.—

July, 1810.

IV. SONG

Come [Harriet]! sweet is the hour,
Soft Zephyrs breathe gently around,
The anemone's night-boding flower,
Has sunk its pale head on the ground.

'Tis thus the world's keenness hath torn,
Some mild heart that expands to its blast,
'Tis thus that the wretched forlorn,
Sinks poor and neglected at last.—

The world with its keenness and woe,
Has no charms or attraction for me,
Its unkindness with grief has laid low,
The heart which is faithful to thee.

The high trees that wave past the moon,
As I walk in their umbrage with you,
All declare I must part with you soon,
All bid you a tender adieu!—

Then [Harriet]! dearest farewell,
You and I love, may ne'er meet again;
These woods and these meadows can tell
How soft and how sweet was the strain.—

April, 1810.

V. SONG

DESPAIR

Ask not the pallid stranger's woe,
With beating heart and throbbing breast,
Whose step is faltering, weak, and slow,
As though the body needed rest.—

Whose 'wildered eye no object meets,
Nor cares to ken a friendly glance,
With silent grief his bosom beats,—
Now fixed, as in a deathlike trance.

Who looks around with fearful eye,
And shuns all converse with mankind,
As though some one his griefs might spy,
And soothe them with a kindred mind.

A friend or foe to him the same,
He looks on each with equal eye;
The difference lies but in the name,
To none for comfort can he fly.—

'Twas deep despair, and sorrow's trace,
To him too keenly given,
Whose memory, time could not efface—
His peace was lodged in Heaven.—

He looks on all this world bestows,
The pride and pomp of power,
As trifles best for pageant shows
Which vanish in an hour.

When torn is dear affection's tie,
Sinks the soft heart full low;
It leaves without a parting sigh,
All that these realms bestow.
June, 1810.

VI. SONG

SORROW

To me this world's a dreary blank,
All hopes in life are gone and fled,
My high strung energies are sank,
And all my blissful hopes lie dead.—

The world once smiling to my view,
Showed scenes of endless bliss and joy;
The world I then but little knew,
Ah! little knew how pleasures cloy;

All then was jocund, all was gay,
No thought beyond the present hour,
I danced in pleasure's fading ray,
Fading alas! as drooping flower.

Nor do the heedless in the throng,
One thought beyond the morrow give[,]
They court the feast, the dance, the song,
Nor think how short their time to live.

The heart that bears deep sorrow's trace,
What earthly comfort can console,
It drags a dull and lengthened pace,
'Till friendly death its woes enroll.—

The sunken cheek, the humid eyes,
E'en better than the tongue can tell;
In whose sad breast deep sorrow lies,
Where memory's rankling traces dwell.—

The rising tear, the stifled sigh,
A mind but ill at ease display,
Like blackening clouds in stormy sky,
Where fiercely vivid lightnings play.

Thus when souls' energy is dead,
When sorrow dims each earthly view,
When every fairy hope is fled,
We bid ungrateful world adieu.
August, 1810.

VII. SONG

HOPE

And said I that all hope was fled,
That sorrow and despair were mine,
That each enthusiast wish was dead,
Had sank beneath pale Misery's shrine.—

Seest thou the sunbeam's yellow glow,
That robes with liquid streams of light;
Yon distant Mountain's craggy brow.
And shows the rocks so fair,—so bright ——

Tis thus sweet expectation's ray,
In softer view shows distant hours,
And portrays each succeeding day,
As dressed in fairer, brighter flowers,—

The vermeil tinted flowers that blossom;
Are frozen but to bud anew,
Then sweet deceiver calm my bosom,
Although thy visions be not true,—

Yet true they are,—and I'll believe,
Thy whisperings soft of love and peace,
God never made thee to deceive,
'Tis sin that bade thy empire cease.

Yet though despair my life should gloom,
Though horror should around me close,
With those I love, beyond the tomb,
Hope shows a balm for all my woes.
August, 1810.

VIII. SONG

Translated from the Italian

Oh! what is the gain of restless care,
And what is ambitious treasure?
And what are the joys that the modish share,
In their sickly haunts of pleasure?

My husband's repast with delight I spread,
What though 'tis but rustic fare,
May each guardian angel protect his shed,
May contentment and quiet be there.

And may I support my husband's years,
May I soothe his dying pain,
And then may I dry my fast falling tears,
And meet him in Heaven again.

July, 1810.

IX. SONG

Translated from the German

Ah! grasp the dire dagger and couch the fell spear,
If vengeance and death to thy bosom be dear,
The dastard shall perish, death's torment shall prove,
For fate and revenge are decreed from above.

Ah! where is the hero, whose nerves strung by youth,
Will defend the firm cause of justice and truth;
With insatiate desire whose bosom shall swell,
To give up the oppressor to judgement and Hell—

For him shall the fair one twine chaplets of bays,
To him shall each warrior give merited praise,
And triumphant returned from the clangour of arms,
He shall find his reward in his loved maiden's charms.

In ecstatic confusion the warrior shall sip,
The kisses that glow on his love's dewy lip,
And mutual, eternal, embraces shall prove,
The rewards of the brave are the transports of love.

October, 1809.

X

THE IRISHMAN'S SONG

The stars may dissolve, and the fountain of light
May sink into ne'er ending chaos and night,
Our mansions must fall, and earth vanish away,
But thy courage O Erin! may never decay.

See! the wide wasting ruin extends all around,
Our ancestors' dwellings lie sunk on the ground,
Our foes ride in triumph throughout our domains,
And our mightiest heroes lie stretched on the plains.

Ah! dead is the harp which was wont to give pleasure,
Ah! sunk is our sweet country's rapturous measure,
But the war note is waked, and the clangour of spears,
The dread yell of Sloghan yet sounds in our ears.

Ah! where are the heroes! triumphant in death,
Convulsed they recline on the blood sprinkled heath,
Or the yelling ghosts ride on the blast that sweeps by,
And 'my countrymen! vengeance!' incessantly cry.

October, 1809.

XI. SONG

Fierce roars the midnight storm
  O'er the wild mountain,
Dark clouds the night deform,
  Swift rolls the fountain—

See! o'er yon rocky height,
  Dim mists are flying—
See by the moon's pale light,
  Poor Laura 's dying!

Shame and remorse shall howl,
  By her false pillow—
Fiercer than storms that roll,
  O'er the white billow;

No hand her eyes to close,
When life is flying,
But she will find repose,
For Laura 's dying!
Then will I seek my love,
Then will I cheer her,
Then my esteem will prove,
When no friend is near her.
On her grave I will lie,
When life is parted,
On her grave I will die,
For the false hearted.

DECEMBER, 1809.

XII. SONG

To ——— [HARRIET]

AH! sweet is the moonbeam that sleeps on yon fountain,
And sweet the mild rush of the soft-sighing breeze,
And sweet is the glimpse of yon dimly-seen mountain,
'Neath the verdant arcades of yon shadowy trees.
But sweeter than all was thy tone of affection,
Which scarce seemed to break on the stillness of eve,
'Though the time it is past!—yet the dear recollection,
For aye in the heart of thy [Percy] must live.
Yet he hears thy dear voice in the summer winds sighing,
Mild accents of happiness lisp in his ear,
When the hope-wingèd moments athwart him are flying,
And he thinks of the friend to his bosom so dear.—
And thou dearest friend in his bosom for ever
Must reign unalloyed by the fast rolling year,
He loves thee, and dearest one never, Oh! never
Canst thou cease to be loved by a heart so sincere.

AUGUST, 1810.

XIII. SONG

To ——— [HARRIET]

STERN, stern is the voice of fate's fearful command,
When accents of horror it breathes in our ear,
Or compels us for aye bid adieu to the land,
Where exists that loved friend to our bosom so dear,
'Tis sterner than death o'er the shuddering wretch bending,
And in skeleton grasp his fell sceptre extending,
Like the heart-stricken deer to that loved covert wending,
Which never again to his eyes may appear—
And ah! he may envy the heart-stricken quarry,
Who bids to the friend of affection farewell,
He may envy the bosom so bleeding and gory,
He may envy the sound of the drear passing knell,
Not so deep is his grief on his death couch reposing,
When on the last vision his dim eyes are closing!
As the outcast whose love-raptured senses are losing,
The last tones of thy voice on the wild breeze that swell!
Those tones were so soft, and so sad, that ah! never,
Can the sound cease to vibrate on Memory's ear,
In the stern wreck of Nature for ever and ever,
The remembrance must live of a friend so sincere.

AUGUST, 1810.

XIV
SAINT EDMOND'S EVE

OH! did you observe the Black Canon pass,
And did you observe his frown?

XII—11 hope-wingèd] hoped-wingèd *1810*.

He goeth to say the midnight mass,
In holy St. Edmond's town.

He goeth to sing the burial chaunt,
And to lay the wandering sprite,
Whose shadowy, restless form doth haunt,
The Abbey's drear aisle this night.

It saith it will not its wailing cease,
'Till that holy man come near,
'Till he pour o'er its grave the prayer of peace,
And sprinkle the hallowed tear.

The Canon's horse is stout and strong
The road is plain and fair,
But the Canon slowly wends along,
And his brow is gloomed with care.

Who is it thus late at the Abbey-gate?
Sullen echoes the portal bell,
It sounds like the whispering voice of fate,
It sounds like a funeral knell.

The Canon his faltering knee thrice bowed,
And his frame was convulsed with fear,
When a voice was heard distinct and loud,
'Prepare! for thy hour is near.'

He crosses his breast, he mutters a prayer,
To Heaven he lifts his eye,
He heeds not the Abbot's gazing stare,
Nor the dark Monks who murmured by.

Bare-headed he worships the sculptured saints
That frown on the sacred walls,
His face it grows pale,—he trembles, he faints,
At the Abbot's feet he falls.

And straight the father's robe he kissed,
Who cried, 'Grace dwells with thee,
The spirit will fade like the morning mist,
At your benedicite.

'Now haste within! the board is spread,
Keen blows the air, and cold,
The spectre sleeps in its earthy bed,
'Till St. Edmond's bell hath tolled,—

'Yet rest your wearied limbs to-night,
You've journeyed many a mile,
To-morrow lay the wailing sprite,
That shrieks in the moonlight aisle.

'Oh! faint are my limbs and my bosom is cold,
Yet to-night must the sprite be laid,
Yet to-night when the hour of horror's told,
Must I meet the wandering shade.

'Nor food, nor rest may now delay,—
For hark! the echoing pile,
A bell loud shakes!—Oh haste away,
O lead to the haunted aisle.'

The torches slowly move before,
The cross is raised on high,
A smile of peace the Canon wore,
But horror dimmed his eye—

And now they climb the footworn stair,
The chapel gates unclose,
Now each breathed low a fervent prayer,
And fear each bosom froze——

Now paused awhile the doubtful band
And viewed the solemn scene,—
Full dark the clustered columns stand,
The moon gleams pale between—

'Say father, say, what cloisters' gloom
Conceals the unquiet shade,
Within what dark unhallowed tomb,
The corse unblessed was laid.'

'Through yonder drear aisle alone it walks,
And murmurs a mournful plaint,
Of thee! Black Canon, it wildly talks,
And call on thy patron saint—

The pilgrim this night with wondering eyes,
As he prayed at St. Edmond's shrine,
From a black marble tomb hath seen it rise,
And under yon arch recline.'—

'Oh! say upon that black marble tomb,
What memorial sad appears.'—
'Undistinguished it lies in the chancel's gloom,
No memorial sad it bears'—

The Canon his paternoster reads,
His rosary hung by his side,
Now swift to the chancel doors he leads,
And untouched they open wide,

Resistless, strange sounds his steps impel,
To approach to the black marble tomb,
'Oh! enter, Black Canon,' a whisper fell,
'Oh! enter, thy hour is come.'

He paused, told his beads, and the threshold passed,
Oh! horror, the chancel doors close,
A loud yell was borne on the rising blast,
And a deep, dying groan arose.

The Monks in amazement shuddering stand,
They burst through the chancel's gloom,
From St. Edmond's shrine, lo! a skeleton's hand,
Points to the black marble tomb.

Lo! deeply engraved, an inscription blood red,
In characters fresh and clear—
'The guilty Black Canon of Elmham 's dead,
And his wife lies buried here!'

In Elmham's tower he wedded a Nun,
To St. Edmond's his bride he bore,
On this eve her noviciate here was begun,
And a Monk's gray weeds she wore;—

O! deep was her conscience dyed with guilt,
Remorse she full oft revealed,
Her blood by the ruthless Black Canon was spilt,
And in death her lips he sealed;

Her spirit to penance this night was doomed,
'Till the Canon atoned the deed,
Here together they now shall rest entombed,
'Till their bodies from dust are freed—

Hark! a loud peal of thunder shakes the roof,
Round the altar bright lightnings play,
Speechless with horror the Monks stand aloof,
And the storm dies sudden away—

The inscription was gone! a cross on the ground,
And a rosary shone through the gloom,
But never again was the Canon there found,
Or the Ghost on the black marble tomb.

XV. REVENGE

'Ah! quit me not yet, for the wind whistles shrill,
Its blast wanders mournfully over the hill,
The thunder's wild voice rattles madly above,
You will not then, cannot then, leave me my love.—'

I must dearest Agnes, the night is far gone—
I must wander this evening to Strasburg alone,
I must seek the drear tomb of my ancestors' bones,
And must dig their remains from beneath the cold stones.

'For the spirit of Conrad there meets me this night,
And we quit not the tomb 'till dawn of the light,
And Conrad 's been dead just a month and a day!
So farewell dearest Agnes for I must away,—

'He bid me bring with me what most I held dear,
Or a month from that time should I lie on my bier,
And I'd sooner resign this false fluttering breath,
Than my Agnes should dread either danger or death,

'And I love you to madness my Agnes I love,
My constant affection this night will I prove,
This night will I go to the sepulchre's jaw,
Alone will I glut its all conquering maw'—

'No! no loved Adolphus thy Agnes will share,
In the tomb all the dangers that wait for you there,
I fear not the spirit,—I fear not the grave,
My dearest Adolphus I'd perish to save'—

'Nay seek not to say that thy love shall not go,
But spare me those ages of horror and woe,
For I swear to thee here that I'll perish ere day,
If you go unattended by Agnes away'—

The night it was bleak the fierce storm raged around,
The lightning's blue fire-light flashed on the ground,
Strange forms seemed to flit,—and howl tidings of fate,
As Agnes advanced to the sepulchre gate.—

The youth struck the portal,—the echoing sound
Was fearfully rolled midst the tombstones around,
The blue lightning gleamed o'er the dark chapel spire,
And tinged were the storm clouds with sulphurous fire.

Still they gazed on the tombstone where Conrad reclined,
Yet they shrank at the cold chilling blast of the wind,
When a strange silver brilliance pervaded the scene,
And a figure advanced—tall in form—fierce in mien.

A mantle encircled his shadowy form,
As light as a gossamer borne on the storm,
Celestial terror sat throned in his gaze,
Like the midnight pestiferous meteor's blaze.—

Spirit.

Thy father, Adolphus! was false, false as hell,
And Conrad has cause to remember it well,
He ruined my Mother, despised me his son,
I quitted the world ere my vengeance was done.

I was nearly expiring—'twas close of the day,—
A demon advanced to the bed where I lay,
He gave me the power from whence I was hurled,
To return to revenge, to return to the world,—

Now Adolphus I'll seize thy best loved in my arms,
I'll drag her to Hades all blooming in charms,
On the black whirlwind's thundering pinion I'll ride,
And fierce yelling fiends shall exult o'er thy bride—

He spoke, and extending his ghastly arms wide,
Majestic advanced with a swift noiseless stride,
He clasped the fair Agnes—he raised her on high,
And cleaving the roof sped his way to the sky—

All was now silent,—and over the tomb,
Thicker, deeper, was swiftly extended a gloom,
Adolphus in horror sank down on the stone,
And his fleeting soul fled with a harrowing groan.

December, 1809.

XVI. GHASTA

OR, THE AVENGING DEMON!!!

The idea of the following tale was taken from a few unconnected German Stanzas.—The principal Character is evidently the Wandering Jew, and although not mentioned by name, the burning Cross on his forehead undoubtedly alludes to that superstition, so prevalent in the part of Germany called the Black Forest, where this scene is supposed to lie.

Hark! the owlet flaps her wing,
In the pathless dell beneath,
Hark! night ravens loudly sing,
Tidings of despair and death.—

Horror covers all the sky,
Clouds of darkness blot the moon,
Prepare! for mortal thou must die,
Prepare to yield thy soul up soon—

Fierce the tempest raves around,
Fierce the volleyed lightnings fly,
Crashing thunder shakes the ground,
Fire and tumult fill the sky.—

Hark! the tolling village bell,
Tells the hour of midnight come,
Now can blast the powers of Hell,
Fiend-like goblins now can roam—

See! his crest all stained with rain,
A warrior hastening speeds his way,
He starts, looks round him, starts again,
And sighs for the approach of day.

See! his frantic steed he reins,
See! he lifts his hands on high,
Implores a respite to his pains,
From the powers of the sky.—

He seeks an Inn, for faint from toil,
Fatigue had bent his lofty form,
To rest his wearied limbs awhile,
Fatigued with wandering and the storm.

. . . . .
. . . . .

Slow the door is opened wide—
With trackless tread a stranger came,
His form Majestic, slow his stride,
He sate, nor spake,—nor told his name—

Terror blanched the warrior's cheek,
Cold sweat from his forehead ran,
In vain his tongue essayed to speak,—
At last the stranger thus began:

'Mortal! thou that saw'st the sprite,
Tell me what I wish to know,
Or come with me before 'tis light,
Where cypress trees and mandrakes grow.

'Fierce the avenging Demon's ire,
Fiercer than the wintry blast,
Fiercer than the lightning's fire,
When the hour of twilight's past'—

The warrior raised his sunken eye,
It met the stranger's sullen scowl,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die,'
In burning letters chilled his soul.

Warrior.

Stranger! whoso'er you are,
I feel impelled my tale to tell—
Horrors stranger shalt thou hear,
Horrors drear as those of Hell.

O'er my Castle silence reigned,
Late the night and drear the hour,
When on the terrace I observed,
A fleeting shadowy mist to lower.—

Light the cloud as summer fog,
Which transient shuns the morning beam;
Fleeting as the cloud on bog,
That hangs or on the mountain stream.—

Horror seized my shuddering brain,
Horror dimmed my starting eye,
In vain I tried to speak,—In vain
My limbs essayed the spot to fly—

At last the thin and shadowy form,
With noiseless, trackless footsteps came,—
Its light robe floated on the storm,
Its head was bound with lambent flame.

In chilling voice drear as the breeze
Which sweeps along th' autumnal ground,

Which wanders through the leafless trees,
Or the mandrake's groan which floats around.

'Thou art mine and I am thine,
'Till the sinking of the world,
I am thine and thou art mine,
'Till in ruin death is hurled ——

'Strong the power and dire the fate,
Which drags me from the depths of Hell,
Breaks the tomb's eternal gate,
Where fiendish shapes and dead men yell,

'Haply I might ne'er have shrank
From flames that rack the guilty dead,
Haply I might ne'er have sank
On pleasure's flow'ry, thorny bed—

—'But stay! no more I dare disclose,
Of the tale I wish to tell,
On Earth relentless were my woes,
But fiercer are my pangs in Hell—

'Now I claim thee as my love,
Lay aside all chilling fear,
My affection will I prove,
Where sheeted ghosts and spectres are!

'For thou art mine, and I am thine,
'Till the dreaded judgement day,
I am thine, and thou art mine—
Night is past—I must away.'

Still I gazed, and still the form
Pressed upon my aching sight,
Still I braved the howling storm,
When the ghost dissolved in night.—

Restless, sleepless fled the night,
Sleepless as a sick man's bed,
When he sighs for morning light,
When he turns his aching head,—

Slow and painful passed the day,
Melancholy seized my brain,
Lingering fled the hours away,
Lingering to a wretch in pain.—

At last came night, ah! horrid hour,
Ah! chilling time that wakes the dead,
When demons ride the clouds that lower,
—The phantom sat upon my bed.

In hollow voice, low as the sound
Which in some charnel makes its moan,
What floats along the burying ground,
The phantom claimed me as her own.

Her chilling finger on my head,
With coldest touch congealed my soul—
Cold as the finger of the dead,
Or damps which round a tombstone roll—

Months are passed in lingering round,
Every night the spectre comes,
With thrilling step it shakes the ground,
With thrilling step it round me roams—

Stranger! I have told to thee,
All the tale I have to tell—
Stranger! canst thou tell to me,
How to 'scape the powers of Hell?—

Stranger.

Warrior! I can ease thy woes,
Wilt thou, wilt thou, come with me—
Warrior! I can all disclose,
Follow, follow, follow me.

Yet the tempest's duskiest wing,
Its mantle stretches o'er the sky,
Yet the midnight ravens sing,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.'

At last they saw a river clear,
That crossed the heathy path they trod,
The Stranger's look was wild and drear,
The firm Earth shook beneath his nod—

He raised a wand above his head,
He traced a circle on the plain,
In a wild verse he called the dead,
The dead with silent footsteps came.

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114 its] it *1810*. 115 What] *query* Which?

A burning brilliance on his head,
Flaming filled the stormy air,
In a wild verse he called the dead,
The dead in motley crowd were there.—

'Ghasta! Ghasta! come along,
Bring thy fiendish crowd with thee,
Quickly raise th' avenging Song,
Ghasta! Ghasta! come to me.'

Horrid shapes in mantles gray,
Flit athwart the stormy night,
'Ghasta! Ghasta! come away,
Come away before 'tis light.'

See! the sheeted Ghost they bring,
Yelling dreadful o'er the heath,
Hark! the deadly verse they sing,
Tidings of despair and death!

The yelling Ghost before him stands,
See! she rolls her eyes around,
Now she lifts her bony hands,
Now her footsteps shake the ground.

Stranger.

Phantom of Theresa say,
Why to earth again you came,
Quickly speak, I must away!
Or you must bleach for aye in flame,—

Phantom.

Mighty one I know thee now,
Mightiest power of the sky,
Know thee by thy flaming brow,
Know thee by thy sparkling eye.

That fire is scorching! Oh! I came,
From the caverned depth of Hell,
My fleeting false Rodolph to claim,
Mighty one! I know thee well.—

Stranger.

Ghasta! seize yon wandering sprite,
Drag her to the depth beneath,
Take her swift, before 'tis light,
Take her to the cells of death!

Thou that heardst the trackless dead,
In the mouldering tomb must lie,
Mortal! look upon my head,
Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.

Of glowing flame a cross was there,
Which threw a light around his form,
Whilst his lank and raven hair,
Floated wild upon the storm.—

The warrior upwards turned his eyes,
Gazed upon the cross of fire,
There sat horror and surprise,
There sat God's eternal ire.—

A shivering through the Warrior flew,
Colder than the nightly blast,
Colder than the evening dew,
When the hour of twilight's past.—

Thunder shakes th' expansive sky,
Shakes the bosom of the heath,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die'—
The warrior sank convulsed in death.

JANUARY, 1810.

XVII. FRAGMENT,

OR THE TRIUMPH OF CONSCIENCE

'TWAS dead of the night when I sate in my dwelling,
One glimmering lamp was expiring and low,—
Around the dark tide of the tempest was swelling,
Along the wild mountains night-ravens were yelling,
They bodingly presaged destruction and woe!

'Twas then that I started, the wild storm was howling,
Nought was seen, save the lightning that danced on the sky,
Above me the crash of the thunder was rolling,
And low, chilling murmurs the blast wafted by.—

My heart sank within me, unheeded the jar
Of the battling clouds on the mountain-tops broke,
Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in mine ear,

This heart hard as iron was stranger to fear,
But conscience in low noiseless whispering spoke.
'Twas then that her form on the whirlwind uprearing,
The dark ghost of the murdered Victoria strode,
Her right hand a blood reeking dagger was bearing,
She swiftly advanced to my lonesome abode.—
I wildly then called on the tempest to bear me!

. . . .
. . . .

POEMS FROM ST. IRVYNE, OR, THE ROSICRUCIAN

[*St. Irvyne; or The Rosicrucian*, appeared early in 1811 (see *Bibliographical List*). Rossetti (1870) relying on a passage in Medwin's *Life of Shelley* (i. p. 74), assigns i, iv, v, and vi to 1808, and ii and iv to 1809. The titles of i, iii, iv, and v are Rossetti's; those of ii and vi are Dowden's.]

I.—VICTORIA

[Another version of *The Triumph of Conscience* immediately preceding.]

I

'Twas dead of the night, when I sat in my dwelling;
One glimmering lamp was expiring and low;
Around, the dark tide of the tempest was swelling,
Along the wild mountains night-ravens were yelling,—
They bodingly presaged destruction and woe.

II

'Twas then that I started!—the wild storm was howling,
Nought was seen, save the lightning, which danced in the sky;
Above me, the crash of the thunder was rolling,
And low, chilling murmurs, the blast wafted by.

III

My heart sank within me—unheeded the war
Of the battling clouds, on the mountain-tops, broke;—
Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in mine ear—
This heart, hard as iron, is stranger to fear;
But conscience in low, noiseless whispering spoke.

IV

'Twas then that her form on the whirlwind upholding,
The ghost of the murdered Victoria strode;
In her right hand, a shadowy shroud she was holding,
She swiftly advanced to my lonesome abode.

V

I wildly then called on the tempest to bear me—

. . . . .

II.—'ON THE DARK HEIGHT OF JURA'

I

Ghosts of the dead! have I not heard your yelling
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the blast,
When o'er the dark aether the tempest is swelling,
And on eddying whirlwind the thunder-peal passed?

II

For oft have I stood on the dark height of Jura,
Which frowns on the valley that opens beneath;
Oft have I braved the chill night-tempest's fury,
Whilst around me, I thought, echoed murmurs of death.

I. *Victoria: without title, 1811.*

II. *On the Dark, &c.: without title, 1811; The Father's Spectre, Rossetti, 1870.*

III

And now, whilst the winds of the mountain are howling,
O father! thy voice seems to strike on mine ear:
In air whilst the tide of the night-storm is rolling,
It breaks on the pause of the elements' jar.

IV

On the wing of the whirlwind which roars o'er the mountain
Perhaps rides the ghost of my sire who is dead:
On the mist of the tempest which hangs o'er the fountain,
Whilst a wreath of dark vapour encircles his head.

III.—SISTER ROSA: A BALLAD

I

THE death-bell beats!—
The mountain repeats
The echoing sound of the knell;
And the dark Monk now
Wraps the cowl round his brow,
As he sits in his lonely cell.

II

And the cold hand of death
Chills his shuddering breath,
As he lists to the fearful lay
Which the ghosts of the sky,
As they sweep wildly by,
Sing to departed day.
And they sing of the hour
When the stern fates had power
To resolve Rosa's form to its clay.

III

But that hour is past;
And that hour was the last
Of peace to the dark Monk's brain.
Bitter tears, from his eyes, gushed silent and fast;
And he strove to suppress them in vain.

IV

Then his fair cross of gold he dashed on the floor,
When the death-knell struck on his ear.—
'Delight is in store
For her evermore;
But for me is fate, horror, and fear.'

V

Then his eyes wildly rolled,
When the death-bell tolled,
And he raged in terrific woe.
And he stamped on the ground,—
But when ceased the sound,
Tears again began to flow.

VI

And the ice of despair
Chilled the wild throb of care,
And he sate in mute agony still;
Till the night-stars shone through the cloudless air,
And the pale moonbeam slept on the hill.

VII

Then he knelt in his cell:—
And the horrors of hell
Were delights to his agonized pain,
And he prayed to God to dissolve the spell,
Which else must for ever remain.

VIII

And in fervent pray'r he knelt on the ground,
Till the abbey bell struck One:
His feverish blood ran chill at the sound:
A voice hollow and horrible murmured around—
'The term of thy penance is done!'

IX

Grew dark the night;
The moonbeam bright
Waxed faint on the mountain high;
And, from the black hill,
Went a voice cold and still,—
'Monk! thou art free to die'

X

Then he rose on his feet,
And his heart loud did beat,
And his limbs they were palsied with dread;
Whilst the grave's clammy dew

III. *Sister Rosa: Ballad, 1811.*

O'er his pale forehead grew;
And he shuddered to sleep with the dead.

XI

And the wild midnight storm
Raved around his tall form,
As he sought the chapel's gloom:
And the sunk grass did sigh
To the wind, bleak and high,
As he searched for the new-made tomb.

XII

And forms, dark and high,
Seemed around him to fly,
And mingle their yells with the blast:
And on the dark wall
Half-seen shadows did fall,
As enhorrored he onward passed.

XIII

And the storm-fiends wild rave
O'er the new-made grave,
And dread shadows linger around.
The Monk called on God his soul to save,
And, in horror, sank on the ground.

XIV

Then despair nerved his arm
To dispel the charm,
And he burst Rosa's coffin asunder.
And the fierce storm did swell
More terrific and fell,
And louder pealed the thunder.

XV

And laughed, in joy, the fiendish throng,
Mixed with ghosts of the mouldering dead:
And their grisly wings, as they floated along,
Whistled in murmurs dread.

XVI

And her skeleton form the dead Nun reared
Which dripped with the chill dew of hell.
In her half-eaten eyeballs two pale flames appeared,
And triumphant their gleam on the dark Monk glared,
As he stood within the cell.

XVII

And her lank hand lay on his shuddering brain;
But each power was nerved by fear.—
'I never, henceforth, may breathe again;
Death now ends mine anguished pain.—
The grave yawns,—we meet there.'

XVIII

And her skeleton lungs did utter the sound,
So deadly, so lone, and so fell,
That in long vibrations shuddered the ground;
And as the stern notes floated around,
A deep groan was answered from hell.

IV.—St. Irvyne's Tower

I

How swiftly through Heaven's wide expanse
Bright day's resplendent colours fade!
How sweetly does the moonbeam's glance
With silver tint St. Irvyne's glade!

II

No cloud along the spangled air,
Is borne upon the evening breeze;
How solemn is the scene! how fair
The moonbeams rest upon the trees!

III

Yon dark gray turret glimmers white,
Upon it sits the mournful owl;
Along the stillness of the night,
Her melancholy shriekings roll.

IV

But not alone on Irvyne's tower,
The silver moonbeam pours her ray;
It gleams upon the ivied bower,
It dances in the cascade's spray.

V

'Ah! why do dark'ning shades conceal
The hour, when man must cease to be?
Why may not human minds unveil
The dim mists of futurity?

IV. *St. Irvyne's Tower*: *Song, 1810.*

VI

'The keenness of the world hath torn
The heart which opens to its blast;
Despised, neglected, and forlorn,
Sinks the wretch in death at last.'

V.—BEREAVEMENT

I

How stern are the woes of the desolate mourner,
As he bends in still grief o'er the hallowèd bier,
As enanguished he turns from the laugh of the scorner,
And drops, to Perfection's remembrance, a tear;
When floods of despair down his pale cheek are streaming,
When no blissful hope on his bosom is beaming,
Or, if lulled for awhile, soon he starts from his dreaming,
And finds torn the soft ties to affection so dear.

II

Ah! when shall day dawn on the night of the grave,
Or summer succeed to the winter of death?
Rest awhile, hapless victim, and Heaven will save
The spirit, that faded away with the breath.
Eternity points in its amaranth bower,
Where no clouds of fate o'er the sweet prospect lower,
Unspeakable pleasure, of goodness the dower,
When woe fades away like the mist of the heath.

VI.—THE DROWNED LOVER

I

AH! faint are her limbs, and her footstep is weary,
Yet far must the desolate wanderer roam;
Though the tempest is stern, and the mountain is dreary,
She must quit at deep midnight her pitiless home.
I see her swift foot dash the dew from the whortle,
As she rapidly hastes to the green grove of myrtle;
And I hear, as she wraps round her figure the kirtle,
'Stay thy boat on the lake,—dearest Henry, I come.'

II

High swelled in her bosom the throb of affection,
As lightly her form bounded over the lea,
And arose in her mind every dear recollection;
'I come, dearest Henry, and wait but for thee.'
How sad, when dear hope every sorrow is soothing,
When sympathy's swell the soft bosom is moving,
And the mind the mild joys of affection is proving,
Is the stern voice of fate that bids happiness flee!

III

Oh! dark lowered the clouds on that horrible eve,
And the moon dimly gleamed through the tempested air;
Oh! how could fond visions such softness deceive?
Oh! how could false hope rend a bosom so fair?
Thy love's pallid corse the wild surges are laving,
O'er his form the fierce swell of the tempest is raving;
But, fear not, parting spirit; thy goodness is saving,
In eternity's bowers, a seat for thee there.

V. *Bereavement* : *Song, 1811.*
VI. *The Drowned Lover* : *Song, 1811* ; *The Lake-Storm, Rossetti, 1870.*

POSTHUMOUS FRAGMENTS OF MARGARET NICHOLSON

Being Poems found amongst the Papers of that noted Female who attempted the life of the King in 1786. Edited by John Fitzvictor.

[The *Posthumous Fragments*, published at Oxford by Shelley, appeared in November, 1810. See *Bibliographical List.*]

ADVERTISEMENT

The energy and native genius of these Fragments must be the only apology which the Editor can make for thus intruding them on the public notice. The first I found with no title, and have left it so. It is intimately connected with the dearest interests of universal happiness; and much as we may deplore the fatal and enthusiastic tendency which the ideas of this poor female had acquired, we cannot fail to pay the tribute of unequivocal regret to the departed memory of genius, which, had it been rightly organized, would have made that intellect, which has since become the victim of frenzy and despair, a most brilliant ornament to society.

In case the sale of these Fragments evinces that the public have any curiosity to be presented with a more copious collection of my unfortunate Aunt's poems, I have other papers in my possession which shall, in that case, be subjected to their notice. It may be supposed they require much arrangement; but I send the following to the press in the same state in which they came into my possession. J. F.

WAR

Ambition, power, and avarice, now have hurled
Death, fate, and ruin, on a bleeding world.
See! on yon heath what countless victims lie,
Hark! what loud shrieks ascend through yonder sky;
Tell then the cause, 'tis sure the avenger's rage
Has swept these myriads from life's crowded stage:
Hark to that groan, an anguished hero dies,
He shudders in death's latest agonies;
Yet does a fleeting hectic flush his cheek,
Yet does his parting breath essay to speak—
'Oh God! my wife, my children—Monarch thou
For whose support this fainting frame lies low;
For whose support in distant lands I bleed,
Let his friends' welfare be the warrior's meed.
He hears me not—ah! no—kings cannot hear,
For passion's voice has dulled their listless ear.
To thee, then, mighty God, I lift my moan,
Thou wilt not scorn a suppliant's anguished groan.
Oh! now I die—but still is death's fierce pain—
God hears my prayer—we meet, we meet again.'
He spake, reclined him on death's bloody bed,
And with a parting groan his spirit fled.
Oppressors of mankind to *you* we owe
The baleful streams from whence these miseries flow;
For you how many a mother weeps her son,
Snatched from life's course ere half his race was run!
For you how many a widow drops a tear,
In silent anguish, on her husband's bier!

War: the title is Woodberry's, 1893; no title, 1810.

'Is it then Thine, Almighty Power,' she cries,
'Whence tears of endless sorrow dim these eyes?
Is this the system which Thy powerful sway,
Which else in shapeless chaos sleeping lay,
Formed and approved?—it cannot be—but oh!
Forgive me, Heaven, my brain is warped by woe.'
'Tis not—He never bade the war-note swell,
He never triumphed in the work of hell—
Monarchs of earth! thine is the baleful deed,
Thine are the crimes for which thy subjects bleed.
Ah! when will come the sacred fated time,
When man unsullied by his leaders' crime,
Despising wealth, ambition, pomp, and pride,
Will stretch him fearless by his foemen's side?
Ah! when will come the time, when o'er the plain
No more shall death and desolation reign?
When will the sun smile on the bloodless field,
And the stern warrior's arm the sickle wield?
Not whilst some King, in cold ambition's dreams,
Plans for the field of death his plodding schemes;
Not whilst for private pique the public fall,
And one frail mortal's mandate governs all.
Swelled with command and mad with dizzying sway;
Who sees unmoved his myriads fade away.
Careless who lives or dies—so that he gains
Some trivial point for which he took the pains.
What then are Kings?—I see the trembling crowd,
I hear their fulsome clamours echoed loud;
Their stern oppressor pleased appears awhile,
But April's sunshine is a Monarch's smile—
Kings are but dust—the last eventful day
Will level all and make them lose their sway;
Will dash the sceptre from the Monarch's hand,
And from the warrior's grasp wrest the ensanguined brand.
Oh! Peace, soft Peace, art thou for ever gone,
Is thy fair form indeed for ever flown?
And love and concord hast thou swept away,
As if incongruous with thy parted sway?
Alas, I fear thou hast, for none appear.
Now o'er the palsied earth stalks giant Fear,
With War, and Woe, and Terror, in his train;
List'ning he pauses on the embattled plain,
Then speeding swiftly o'er the ensanguined heath,
Has left the frightful work to Hell and Death.
See! gory Ruin yokes his blood-stained car,
He scents the battle's carnage from afar;
Hell and Destruction mark his mad career,
He tracks the rapid step of hurrying Fear;
Whilst ruined towns and smoking cities tell,
That thy work, Monarch, is the work of Hell.
'It is thy work!' I hear a voice repeat,
Shakes the broad basis of thy blood-stained seat;
And at the orphan's sigh, the widow's moan,

Totters the fabric of thy guilt-stained throne—
'It is thy work, O Monarch;' now the sound
Fainter and fainter, yet is borne around,
Yet to enthusiast ears the murmurs tell
That Heaven, indignant at the work of Hell,
Will soon the cause, the hated cause remove,
Which tears from earth peace, innocence, and love.

FRAGMENT

SUPPOSED TO BE AN EPITHALAMIUM OF FRANCIS RAVAILLAC AND CHARLOTTE CORDAY

'Tis midnight now—athwart the murky air,
Dank lurid meteors shoot a livid gleam;
From the dark storm-clouds flashes a fearful glare,
It shows the bending oak, the roaring stream.

I pondered on the woes of lost mankind,
I pondered on the ceaseless rage of Kings;
My rapt soul dwelt upon the ties that bind
The mazy volume of commingling things,
When fell and wild misrule to man stern sorrow brings.

I heard a yell—it was not the knell,
When the blasts on the wild lake sleep,
That floats on the pause of the summer gale's swell,
O'er the breast of the waveless deep.

I thought it had been death's accents cold
That bade me recline on the shore;
I laid mine hot head on the surge-beaten mould,
And thought to breathe no more.

But a heavenly sleep
That did suddenly steep
In balm my bosom's pain,
Pervaded my soul,
And free from control,
Did mine intellect range again.

Methought enthroned upon a silvery cloud,
Which floated mid a strange and brilliant light;
My form upborne by viewless aether rode,
And spurned the lessening realms of earthly night.
What heavenly notes burst on my ravished ears,
What beauteous spirits met my dazzled eye!
Hark! louder swells the music of the spheres,
More clear the forms of speechless bliss float by,
And heavenly gestures suit aethereal melody.

But fairer than the spirits of the air,
More graceful than the Sylph of symmetry,
Than the enthusiast's fancied love more fair,
Were the bright forms that swept the azure sky.
Enthroned in roseate light, a heavenly band
Strewed flowers of bliss that never fade away;
They welcome virtue to its native land,
And songs of triumph greet the joyous day
When endless bliss the woes of fleeting life repay.

Congenial minds will seek their kindred soul,
E'en though the tide of time has rolled between;
They mock weak matter's impotent control,
And seek of endless life the eternal scene.
At death's vain summons *this* will never die,
In Nature's chaos *this* will not decay—

These are the bands which closely, warmly, tie
Thy soul, O Charlotte, 'yond this chain of clay,
To him who thine must be till time shall fade away.

Yes, Francis! thine was the dear knife that tore
A tyrant's heart-strings from his guilty breast,
Thine was the daring at a tyrant's gore,
To smile in triumph, to contemn the rest;
And thine, loved glory of thy sex! to tear
From its base shrine a despot's haughty soul,
To laugh at sorrow in secure despair,
To mock, with smiles, life's lingering control,
And triumph mid the griefs that round thy fate did roll.

Yes! the fierce spirits of the avenging deep
With endless tortures goad their guilty shades.
I see the lank and ghastly spectres sweep
Along the burning length of yon arcades;
And I see Satan stalk athwart the plain;
He hastes along the burning soil of Hell.
'Welcome, ye despots, to my dark domain,
With maddening joy mine anguished senses swell
To welcome to their home the friends I love so well.'

. . . . .

Hark! to those notes, how sweet, how thrilling sweet
They echo to the sound of angels' feet.

. . . . .

Oh haste to the bower where roses are spread,
For there is prepared thy nuptial bed.
Oh haste—hark! hark!—they're gone.

. . . . .

Chorus of Spirits.

Stay, ye days of contentment and joy,
Whilst love every care is erasing,
Stay ye pleasures that never can cloy,
And ye spirits that can never cease pleasing.

And if any soft passion be near,
Which mortals, frail mortals, can know,
Let love shed on the bosom a tear,
And dissolve the chill ice-drop of woe.

SYMPHONY.

Francis.

'SOFT, my dearest angel, stay,
Oh! you suck my soul away;
Suck on, suck on, I glow, I glow!
Tides of maddening passion roll,
And streams of rapture drown my soul.
Now give me one more billing kiss,
Let your lips now repeat the bliss,
Endless kisses steal my breath,
No life can equal such a death.'

Charlotte.

'Oh! yes I will kiss thine eyes so fair,
And I will clasp thy form;
Serene is the breath of the balmy air,
But I think, love, thou feelest me warm.
And I will recline on thy marble neck
Till I mingle into thee;
And I will kiss the rose on thy cheek,
And thou shalt give kisses to me.
For here is no morn to flout our delight,
Oh! dost thou not joy at this?
And here we may lie an endless night,
A long, long night of bliss.'

Spirits! when raptures move,
Say what it is to love,
When passion's tear stands on the cheek,
When bursts the unconscious sigh;
And the tremulous lips dare not speak
What is told by the soul-felt eye.
But what is sweeter to revenge's ear

---

66 ye] thou *1810*.

Than the fell tyrant's last expiring yell?
Yes! than love's sweetest blisses 'tis more dear
To drink the floatings of a despot's knell.
I wake—'tis done—'tis over.

. . . . .

DESPAIR

And canst thou mock mine agony, thus calm
In cloudless radiance, Queen of silver night?
Can you, ye flow'rets, spread your perfumed balm
Mid pearly gems of dew that shine so bright?
And you wild winds, thus can you sleep so still
Whilst throbs the tempest of my breast so high?
Can the fierce night-fiends rest on yonder hill,
And, in the eternal mansions of the sky,
Can the directors of the storm in powerless silence lie?

Hark! I hear music on the zephyr's wing,
Louder it floats along the unruffled sky;
Some fairy sure has touched the viewless string—
Now faint in distant air the murmurs die.
Awhile it stills the tide of agony.
Now—now it loftier swells—again stern woe
Arises with the awakening melody.
Again fierce torments, such as demons know,
In bitterer, feller tide, on this torn bosom flow.

Arise ye sightless spirits of the storm,
Ye unseen minstrels of the aëreal song,
Pour the fierce tide around this lonely form,
And roll the tempest's wildest swell along.
Dart the red lightning, wing the forkèd flash,
Pour from thy cloud-formed hills the thunder's roar;
Arouse the whirlwind—and let ocean dash
In fiercest tumult on the rocking shore,—
Destroy this life or let earth's fabric be no more.

Yes! every tie that links me here is dead;
Mysterious Fate, thy mandate I obey,
Since hope and peace, and joy, for aye are fled,
I come, terrific power, I come away.
Then o'er this ruined soul let spirits of Hell,
In triumph, laughing wildly, mock its pain;
And though with direst pangs mine heart-strings swell,
I'll echo back their deadly yells again,
Cursing the power that ne'er made aught in vain.

FRAGMENT

Yes! all is past—swift time has fled away,
Yet its swell pauses on my sickening mind;
How long will horror nerve this frame of clay?
I'm dead, and lingers yet my soul behind.
Oh! powerful Fate, revoke thy deadly spell,
And yet that may not ever, ever be,
Heaven will not smile upon the work of Hell;
Ah! no, for Heaven cannot smile on me;
Fate, envious Fate, has sealed my wayward destiny.

I sought the cold brink of the midnight surge,
I sighed beneath its wave to hide my woes,

The rising tempest sung a funeral dirge,
And on the blast a frightful yell arose.
Wild flew the meteors o'er the maddened main,
Wilder did grief athwart my bosom glare;
Stilled was the unearthly howling, and a strain,
Swelled mid the tumult of the battling air,
'Twas like a spirit's song, but yet mere soft and fair.

I met a maniac—like he was to me,
I said—'Poor victim, wherefore dost thou roam?
And canst thou not contend with agony,
That thus at midnight thou dost quit thine home?'
'Ah there she sleeps: cold is her bloodless form,
And I will go to slumber in her grave;
And then our ghosts, whilst raves the maddened storm,
Will sweep at midnight o'er the wildered wave;
Wilt thou our lowly beds with tears of pity lave?'

'Ah! no, I cannot shed the pitying tear,
This breast is cold, this heart can feel no more;
But I can rest me on thy chilling bier,
Can shriek in horror to the tempest's roar.'

. . . . .

THE SPECTRAL HORSEMAN

What was the shriek that struck Fancy's ear
As it sate on the ruins of time that is past?
Hark! it floats on the fitful blast of the wind,
And breathes to the pale moon a funeral sigh.
It is the Benshie's moan on the storm,
Or a shivering fiend that thirsting for sin,
Seeks murder and guilt when virtue sleeps,
Winged with the power of some ruthless king,
And sweeps o'er the breast of the prostrate plain.
It was not a fiend from the regions of Hell
That poured its low moan on the stillness of night:
It was not a ghost of the guilty dead,
Nor a yelling vampire reeking with gore;
But aye at the close of seven years' end,
That voice is mixed with the swell of the storm,
And aye at the close of seven years' end,
A shapeless shadow that sleeps on the hill
Awakens and floats on the mist of the heath.
It is not the shade of a murdered man,
Who has rushed uncalled to the throne of his God,
And howls in the pause of the eddying storm.
This voice is low, cold, hollow, and chill,
'Tis not heard by the ear, but is felt in the soul.
'Tis more frightful far than the death-daemon's scream,
Or the laughter of fiends when they howl o'er the corpse
Of a man who has sold his soul to Hell.
It tells the approach of a mystic form,
A white courser bears the shadowy sprite;
More thin they are than the mists of the mountain,
When the clear moonlight sleeps on the waveless lake.
More pale *his* cheek than the snows of Nithona,
When winter rides on the northern blast,
And howls in the midst of the leafless wood.

Yet when the fierce swell of the tempest is raving,
And the whirlwinds howl in the caves of Inisfallen,
Still secure mid the wildest war of the sky,
The phantom courser scours the waste,
And his rider howls in the thunder's roar.
O'er him the fierce bolts of avenging Heaven
Pause, as in fear, to strike his head.
The meteors of midnight recoil from his figure,
Yet the 'wildered peasant, that oft passes by,
With wonder beholds the blue flash through his form:
And his voice, though faint as the sighs of the dead,
The startled passenger shudders to hear,
More distinct than the thunder's wildest roar.
Then does the dragon, who, chained in the caverns
To eternity, curses the champion of Erin,
Moan and yell loud at the lone hour of midnight,
And twine his vast wreaths round the forms of the daemons;
Then in agony roll his death-swimming eyeballs,
Though 'wildered by death, yet never to die!
Then he shakes from his skeleton folds the nightmares,
Who, shrieking in agony, seek the couch
Of some fevered wretch who courts sleep in vain;
Then the tombless ghosts of the guilty dead
In horror pause on the fitful gale.
They float on the swell of the eddying tempest,
And scared seek the caves of gigantic . . .
Where their thin forms pour unearthly sounds
On the blast that sweeps the breast of the lake,
And mingles its swell with the moonlight air.

MELODY TO A SCENE OF FORMER TIMES

Art thou indeed forever gone,
  Forever, ever, lost to me?
Must this poor bosom beat alone,
  Or beat at all, if not for thee?
Ah! why was love to mortals given,
To lift them to the height of Heaven,
Or dash them to the depths of Hell?
  Yet I do not reproach thee, dear!
Ah, no! the agonies that swell
    This panting breast, this frenzied brain,
  Might wake my ——'s slumb'ring tear.
  Oh! Heaven is witness I did love,
And Heaven does know I love thee still,
Does know the fruitless sick'ning thrill,
  When reason's judgement vainly strove
To blot thee from my memory;
But which might never, never be.
Oh! I appeal to that blest day
When passion's wildest ecstasy
Was coldness to the joys I knew
When every sorrow sunk away.
Oh! I had never lived before,
But now those blisses are no more.
    And now I cease to live again,
I do not blame thee, love; ah, no!
The breast that feels this anguished woe
Throbs for thy happiness alone.
Two years of speechless bliss are gone,
I thank thee, dearest, for the dream.
'Tis night—what faint and distant scream
Comes on the wild and fitful blast?
It moans for pleasures that are past,
It moans for days that are gone by.
Oh! lagging hours, how slow you fly!
  I see a dark and lengthened vale,
The black view closes with the tomb;
But darker is the lowering gloom
  That shades the intervening dale.
In visioned slumber for awhile
I seem again to share thy smile,

I seem to hang upon thy tone.
Again you say, 'Confide in me,
For I am thine, and thine alone,
And thine must ever, ever be.'
But oh! awak'ning still anew,
Athwart my enanguished senses flew
A fiercer, deadlier agony!

[End of *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson.*]

STANZA FROM A TRANSLATION OF THE MARSEILLAISE HYMN

[Published by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876; dated 1810.]

TREMBLE, Kings despised of man!
Ye traitors to your Country,
Tremble! Your parricidal plan
At length shall meet its destiny . . .
We all are soldiers fit to fight,
But if we sink in glory's night
Our mother Earth will give ye new
The brilliant pathway to pursue
Which leads to Death or Victory . . .

BIGOTRY'S VICTIM

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1809–10. The title is Rossetti's (1870).]

I

DARES the lama, most fleet of the sons of the wind,
The lion to rouse from his skull-covered lair?
When the tiger approaches can the fast-fleeting hind
Repose trust in his footsteps of air?
No! Abandoned he sinks in a trance of despair,
The monster transfixes his prey,
On the sand flows his life-blood away;
Whilst India's rocks to his death-yells reply,
Protracting the horrible harmony.

II

Yet the fowl of the desert, when danger encroaches,
Dares fearless to perish defending her brood,
Though the fiercest of cloud-piercing tyrants approaches
Thirsting—ay, thirsting for blood;
And demands, like mankind, his brother for food;
Yet more lenient, more gentle than they;
For hunger, not glory, the prey
Must perish. Revenge does not how in the dead.
Nor ambition with fame crown the murderer's head.

III

Though weak as the lama that bounds on the mountains,
And endued not with fast-fleeting footsteps of air,
Yet, yet will I draw from the purest of fountains,
Though a fiercer than tiger is there.
Though, more dreadful than death, it scatters despair,
Though its shadow eclipses the day,
And the darkness of deepest dismay
Spreads the influence of soul-chilling terror around,
And lowers on the corpses, that rot on the ground.

IV

They came to the fountain to draw from its stream
Waves too pure, too celestial, for mortals to see;
They bathed for awhile in its silvery beam,
Then perished, and perished like me.
For in vain from the grasp of the Bigot I flee;
The most tenderly loved of my soul
Are slaves to his hated control.
He pursues me, he blasts me! 'Tis in vain that I fly:
What remains, but to curse him,—to curse him and die?

ON AN ICICLE THAT CLUNG TO THE GRASS OF A GRAVE

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1809–10. The poem, with title as above, is included in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

I

Oh! take the pure gem to where southerly breezes,
Waft repose to some bosom as faithful as fair,
In which the warm current of love never freezes,
As it rises unmingled with selfishness there,
Which, untainted by pride, unpolluted by care,
Might dissolve the dim icedrop, might bid it arise,
Too pure for these regions, to gleam in the skies.

II

Or where the stern warrior, his country defending,
Dares fearless the dark-rolling battle to pour,
Or o'er the fell corpse of a dread tyrant bending,
Where patriotism red with his guilt-reeking gore
Plants Liberty's flag on the slave-peopled shore,
With victory's cry, with the shout of the free,
Let it fly, taintless Spirit, to mingle with thee.

III

For I found the pure gem, when the daybeam returning,
Ineffectual gleams on the snow-covered plain,
When to others the wished-for arrival of morning
Brings relief to long visions of soul-racking pain;
But regret is an insult—to grieve is in vain:
And why should we grieve that a spirit so fair
Seeks Heaven to mix with its own kindred there?

IV

But still 'twas some Spirit of kindness descending
To share in the load of mortality's woe,
Who over thy lowly-built sepulchre bending
Bade sympathy's tenderest teardrop to flow.
Not for *thee* soft compassion celestials did know,
But if *angels* can weep, sure *man* may repine,
May weep in mute grief o'er thy low-laid shrine.

V

And did I then say, for the altar of glory,
That the earliest, the loveliest of flowers I'd entwine,
Though with millions of blood-reeking victims 'twas gory,
Though the tears of the widow polluted its shrine,
Though around it the orphans, the fatherless pine?
Oh! Fame, all thy glories I'd yield for a tear
To shed on the grave of a heart so sincere.

LOVE

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1811. The title is Rossetti's (1870).]

Why is it said thou canst not live
In a youthful breast and fair,
Since thou eternal life canst give,
Canst bloom for ever there?
Since withering pain no power possessed,
Nor age, to blanch thy vermeil hue,
Nor time's dread victor, death, confessed,
Though bathed with his poison dew,
Still thou retain'st unchanging bloom,
Fixed tranquil, even in the tomb.

And oh! when on the blest, reviving,
The day-star dawns of love,
Each energy of soul surviving
More vivid, soars above,
Hast thou ne'er felt a rapturous thrill,
Like June's warm breath, athwart thee fly,
O'er each idea then to steal,
When other passions die?
Felt it in some wild noonday dream,
When sitting by the lonely stream,
Where Silence says, 'Mine is the dell';
And not a murmur from the plain,
And not an echo from the fell,
Disputes her silent reign.

ON A FÊTE AT CARLTON HOUSE: FRAGMENT

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; dated 1811.]

By the mossy brink,
With me the Prince shall sit and think;
Shall muse in visioned Regency,
Rapt in bright dreams of dawning Royalty.

TO A STAR

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1811. The title is Rossetti's (1870).]

Sweet star, which gleaming o'er the darksome scene
Through fleecy clouds of silvery radiance fliest,
Spanglet of light on evening's shadowy veil,
Which shrouds the day-beam from the waveless lake,
Lighting the hour of sacred love; more sweet
Than the expiring morn-star's paly fires:—
Sweet star! When wearied Nature sinks to sleep,
And all is hushed,—all, save the voice of Love,
Whose broken murmurings swell the balmy blast
Of soft Favonius, which at intervals
Sighs in the ear of stillness, art thou aught but
Lulling the slaves of interest to repose
With that mild, pitying gaze? Oh, I would look
In thy dear beam till every bond of sense
Became enamoured——

TO MARY WHO DIED IN THIS OPINION

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; dated 1810–11.]

I

Maiden, quench the glare of sorrow
Struggling in thine haggard eye:
Firmness dare to borrow
From the wreck of destiny;
For the ray morn's bloom revealing
Can never boast so bright an hue
As that which mocks concealing,
And sheds its loveliest light on you.

II

Yet is the tie departed
Which bound thy lovely soul to bliss?
Has it left thee broken-hearted
In a world so cold as this?
Yet, though, fainting fair one,
Sorrow's self thy cup has given,
Dream thou'lt meet thy dear one,
Never more to part, in Heaven.

III

Existence would I barter
For a dream so dear as thine,
And smile to die a martyr
On affection's bloodless shrine.
Nor would I change for pleasure
That withered hand and ashy cheek,
If my heart enshrined a treasure
Such as forces thine to break.

A TALE OF SOCIETY AS IT IS: FROM FACTS, 1811

[Published (from Esdaile MS. with title as above) by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. Rossetti's title is *Mother and Son.*]

I

She was an agèd woman; and the years
Which she had numbered on her toilsome way

Had bowed her natural powers to decay.
She was an agèd woman; yet the ray
Which faintly glimmered through her starting tears,
Pressed into light by silent misery,
Hath soul's imperishable energy.
She was a cripple, and incapable
To add one mite to gold-fed luxury:
And therefore did her spirit dimly feel
That poverty, the crime of tainting stain,
Would merge her in its depths, never to rise again.

II

One only son's love had supported her.
She long had struggled with infirmity,
Lingering to human life-scenes; for to die,
When fate has spared to rend some mental tie,
Would many wish, and surely fewer dare.
But, when the tyrant's bloodhounds forced the child
For his cursed power unhallowed arms to wield—
Bend to another's will—become a thing
More senseless than the sword of battlefield—
Then did she feel keen sorrow's keenest sting;
And many years had passed ere comfort they would bring.

III

For seven years did this poor woman live
In unparticipated solitude.
Thou mightst have seen her in the forest rude
Picking the scattered remnants of its wood.
If human, thou mightst then have learned to grieve.
The gleanings of precarious charity
Her scantiness of food did scarce supply.
The proofs of an unspeaking sorrow dwelt
Within her ghastly hollowness of eye:
Each arrow of the season's change she felt.
Yet still she groans, ere yet her race were run,
One only hope: it was—once more to see her son.

IV

It was an eve of June, when every star
Spoke peace from Heaven to those on earth that live.
She rested on the moor. 'Twas such an eve
When first her soul began indeed to grieve:
Then he was here; now he is very far.
The sweetness of the balmy evening
A sorrow o'er her agèd soul did fling,
Yet not devoid of rapture's mingled tear:
A balm was in the poison of the sting.
This agèd sufferer for many a year
Had never felt such comfort. She suppressed
A sigh—and turning round, clasped William to her breast!

V

And, though his form was wasted by the woe
Which tyrants on their victims love to wreak,
Though his sunk eyeballs and his faded cheek
Of slavery's violence and scorn did speak,
Yet did the agèd woman's bosom glow.
The vital fire seemed re-illumed within
By this sweet unexpected welcoming.

28 grieve *Esdaile MS.*; feel, *1870.*

37 to those on earth that live *Esdaile MS.*; omitted, *1870.*

Oh, consummation of the fondest hope
That ever soared on Fancy's wildest wing!
Oh, tenderness that foundst so sweet a scope!
Prince who dost pride thee on thy mighty sway,
When *thou* canst feel such love, thou shalt be great as they!

VI

Her son, compelled, the country's foes had fought,
Had bled in battle; and the stern control
Which ruled his sinews and coerced his soul
Utterly poisoned life's unmingled bowl,
And unsubduable evils on him brought.
He was the shadow of the lusty child
Who, when the time of summer season smiled,
Did earn for her a meal of honesty,
And with affectionate discourse beguiled
The keen attacks of pain and poverty;
Till Power, as envying her this only joy,
From her maternal bosom tore the unhappy boy.

VII

And now cold charity's unwelcome dole
Was insufficient to support the pair;
And they would perish rather than would bear
The law's stern slavery, and the insolent stare
With which law loves to rend the poor man's soul—
The bitter scorn, the spirit-sinking noise
Of heartless mirth which women, men, and boys
Wake in this scene of legal misery.

. . . . .

TO THE REPUBLICANS OF NORTH AMERICA

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. with title as above) by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; dated 1812. Rossetti's title is *The Mexican Revolution.*]

I

Brothers! between you and me
Whirlwinds sweep and billows roar:
Yet in spirit oft I see
On thy wild and winding shore
Freedom's bloodless banners wave,—
Feel the pulses of the brave
Unextinguished in the grave,—
See them drenched in sacred gore,—
Catch the warrior's gasping breath
Murmuring 'Liberty or death!'

II

Shout aloud! Let every slave,
Crouching at Corruption's throne,
Start into a man, and brave
Racks and chains without a groan;
And the castle's heartless glow,
And the hovel's vice and woe,
Fade like gaudy flowers that blow—
Weeds that peep, and then are gone
Whilst, from misery's ashes risen,
Love shall burst the captive's prison.

III

Cotopaxi! bid the sound
Through thy sister mountains ring,
Till each valley smile around
At the blissful welcoming!
And, O thou stern Ocean deep,
Thou whose foamy billows sweep
Shores where thousands wake to weep
Whilst they curse a villain king,
On the winds that fan thy breast
Bear thou news of Freedom's rest!

IV

Can the daystar dawn of love,
Where the flag of war unfurled
Floats with crimson stain above
The fabric of a ruined world?
Never but to vengeance driven
When the patriot's spirit shriven
Seeks in death its native Heaven!

There, to desolation hurled,
Widowed love may watch thy bier,
Balm thee with its dying tear.

TO IRELAND

[Published, 1–10, by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; 11–17, 25–28, by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; 18–24 by Kingsland, *Poet-Lore*, July, 1892. Dated 1812.]

I

Bear witness, Erin! when thine injured isle
Sees summer on its verdant pastures smile,
Its cornfields waving in the winds that sweep
The billowy surface of thy circling deep!
Thou tree whose shadow o'er the Atlantic gave
Peace, wealth and beauty, to its friendly wave,
its blossoms fade,
And blighted are the leaves that cast its shade;
Whilst the cold hand gathers its scanty fruit,
Whose chillness struck a canker to its root.

II

I could stand
Upon thy shores, O Erin, and could count
The billows that, in their unceasing swell,
Dash on thy beach, and every wave might seem
An instrument in Time the giant's grasp,
To burst the barriers of Eternity.
Proceed, thou giant, conquering and to conquer;
March on thy lonely way! The nations fall
Beneath thy noiseless footstep; pyramids
That for millenniums have defied the blast,
And laughed at lightnings, thou dost crush to nought.
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,
Is but the fungus of a winter day
That thy light footstep presses into dust.
Thou art a conqueror, Time; all things give way
Before thee but the 'fixed and virtuous will';
The sacred sympathy of soul which was
When thou wert not, which shall be when thou perishest.

. . . . .

ON ROBERT EMMET'S GRAVE

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated 1812.]

. . . . .

VI

No trump tells thy virtues—the grave where they rest
With thy dust shall remain unpolluted by fame,
Till thy foes, by the world and by fortune caressed,
Shall pass like a mist from the light of thy name.

VII

When the storm-cloud that lowers o'er the day-beam is gone,
Unchanged, unextinguished its life-spring will shine;
When Erin has ceased with their memory to groan,
She will smile through the tears of revival on thine.

THE RETROSPECT: CWM ELAN, 1812

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887.]

A scene, which 'wildered fancy viewed
In the soul's coldest solitude,
With that same scene when peaceful love
Flings rapture's colour o'er the grove,
When mountain, meadow, wood and stream

With unalloying glory gleam,
And to the spirit's ear and eye
Are unison and harmony.
The moonlight was my dearer day;
Then would I wander far away,
And, lingering on the wild brook's shore
To hear its unremitting roar,
Would lose in the ideal flow
All sense of overwhelming woe;
Or at the noiseless noon of night
Would climb some heathy mountain's height,
And listen to the mystic sound
That stole in fitful gasps around.
I joyed to see the streaks of day
Above the purple peaks decay,
And watch the latest line of light
Just mingling with the shades of night;
For day with me was time of woe
When even tears refused to flow;
Then would I stretch my languid frame
Beneath the wild woods' gloomiest shade,
And try to quench the ceaseless flame
That on my withered vitals preyed;
Would close mine eyes and dream I were
On some remote and friendless plain,
And long to leave existence there,
If with it I might leave the pain
That with a finger cold and lean
Wrote madness on my withering mien.

It was not unrequited love
That bade my 'wildered spirit rove;
'Twas not the pride disdaining life,
That with this mortal world at strife
Would yield to the soul's inward sense,
Then groan in human impotence,
And weep because it is not given
To taste on Earth the peace of Heaven.
'Twas not that in the narrow sphere
Where Nature fixed my wayward fate
There was no friend or kindred dear
Formed to become that spirit's mate,
Which, searching on tired pinion, found
Barren and cold repulse around;
Oh, no! yet each one sorrow gave
New graces to the narrow grave.
For broken vows had early quelled
The stainless spirit's vestal flame;
Yes! whilst the faithful bosom swelled,
Then the envenomed arrow came,
And Apathy's unaltering eye
Beamed coldness on the misery;
And early I had learned to scorn
The chains of clay that bound a soul
Panting to seize the wings of morn,
And where its vital fires were born
To soar, and spur the cold control
Which the vile slaves of earthly night
Would twine around its struggling flight.

Oh, many were the friends whom fame
Had linked with the unmeaning name,
Whose magic marked among mankind
The casket of my unknown mind,
Which hidden from the vulgar glare
Imbibed no fleeting radiance there.
My darksome spirit sought—it found
A friendless solitude around.
For who that might undaunted stand,
The saviour of a sinking land,
Would crawl, its ruthless tyrant's slave,
And fatten upon Freedom's grave,
Though doomed with her to perish, where
The captive clasps abhorred despair.

They could not share the bosom's feeling,
Which, passion's every throb revealing
Dared force on the world's notice cold
Thoughts of unprofitable mould,
Who bask in Custom's fickle ray,
Fit sunshine of such wintry day!
They could not in a twilight walk
Weave an impassioned web of talk,
Till mysteries the spirits press
In wild yet tender awfulness,
Then feel within our narrow sphere
How little yet how great we are!
But they might shine in courtly glare,
Attract the rabble's cheapest stare,
And might command where'er they move
A thing that bears the name of love;
They might be learnèd, witty, gay,
Foremost in fashion's gilt array,

On Fame's emblazoned pages shine,
Be princes' friends, but never mine!

Ye jagged peaks that frown sublime,
Mocking the blunted scythe of Time,
Whence I would watch its lustre pale
Steal from the moon o'er yonder vale

Thou rock, whose bosom black and vast,
Bared to the stream's unceasing flow,
Ever its giant shade doth cast
On the tumultuous surge below:

Woods, to whose depths retires to die
The wounded Echo's melody,
And whither this lone spirit bent
The footstep of a wild intent:

Meadows! whose green and spangled breast
These fevered limbs have often pressed,
Until the watchful fiend Despair
Slept in the soothing coolness there!
Have not your varied beauties seen
The sunken eye, the withering mien,
Sad traces of the unuttered pain
That froze my heart and burned my brain.
How changed since Nature's summer form
Had last the power my grief to charm,
Since last ye soothed my spirit's sadness,
Strange chaos of a mingled madness!
Changed!—not the loathsome worm that fed
In the dark mansions of the dead,
Now soaring through the fields of air,
And gathering purest nectar there,
A butterfly, whose million hues
The dazzled eye of wonder views,
Long lingering on a work so strange,
Has undergone so bright a change.
How do I feel my happiness?
I cannot tell, but they may guess
Whose every gloomy feeling gone,
Friendship and passion feel alone;
Who see mortality's dull clouds
Before affection's murmur fly,
Whilst the mild glances of her eye
Pierce the thin veil of flesh that shrouds
The spirit's inmost sanctuary.
O thou! whose virtues latest known,
First in this heart yet claim'st a throne;
Whose downy sceptre still shall share
The gentle sway with virtue there;
Thou fair in form, and pure in mind,
Whose ardent friendship rivets fast
The flowery band our fates that bind,
Which incorruptible shall last
When duty's hard and cold control
Has thawed around the burning soul,—
The gloomiest retrospects that bind
With crowns of thorn the bleeding mind,
The prospects of most doubtful hue
That rise on Fancy's shuddering view,—
Are gilt by the reviving ray
Which thou hast flung upon my day.

FRAGMENT OF A SONNET

TO HARRIET

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated August 1, 1812.]

Ever as now with Love and Virtue's glow
May thy unwithering soul not cease to burn,
Still may thine heart with those pure thoughts o'erflow
Which force from mine such quick and warm return.

TO HARRIET

[Published, 5–13, by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876; 58–69, by Shelley, *Notes to Queen Mab*, 1813; and entire (from the Esdaile MS. book) by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated 1812.]

It is not blasphemy to hope that Heaven
More perfectly will give those nameless joys
Which throb within the pulses of the blood
And sweeten all that bitterness which Earth
Infuses in the heaven-born soul. O thou

Whose dear love gleamed upon the gloomy path
Which this lone spirit travelled, drear and cold,
Yet swiftly leading to those awful limits
Which mark the bounds of Time and of the space
When Time shall be no more; wilt thou not turn
Those spirit-beaming eyes and look on me,
Until I be assured that Earth is Heaven,
And Heaven is Earth?—will not thy glowing cheek,
Glowing with soft suffusion, rest on mine,
And breathe magnetic sweetness through the frame
Of my corporeal nature, through the soul
Now knit with these fine fibres? I would give
The longest and the happiest day that fate
Has marked on my existence but to feel
One soul-reviving kiss . . . O thou most dear,
'Tis an assurance that this Earth is Heaven,
And Heaven the flower of that untainted seed
Which springeth here beneath such love as ours.
Harriet! let death all mortal ties dissolve,
But ours shall not be mortal! The cold hand
Of Time may chill the love of earthly minds
Half frozen now; the frigid intercourse
Of common souls lives but a summer's day;
It dies, where it arose, upon this earth.
But ours! oh, 'tis the stretch of Fancy's hope
To portray its continuance as now,
Warm, tranquil, spirit-healing; nor when age
Has tempered these wild ecstasies, and given
A soberer tinge to the luxurious glow
Which blazing on devotion's pinnacle
Makes virtuous passion supersede th
power
Of reason; nor when life's aestival su
To deeper manhood shall have ripene
me;
Nor when some years have added judg
ment's store
To all thy woman sweetness, all the fi
Which throbs in thine enthusiast hear
not then
Shall holy friendship (for what oth
name
May love like ours assume?), not eve
then
Shall Custom so corrupt, or the co
forms
Of this desolate world so harden us,
As when we think of the dear love th
binds
Our souls in soft communion, while
know
Each other's thoughts and feelings, c
we say
Unblushingly a heartless compliment
Praise, hate, or love with the unthin
ing world,
Or dare to cut the unrelaxing nerve
That knits our love to virtue. C
those eyes,
Beaming with mildest radiance on n
heart
To purify its purity, e'er bend
To soothe its vice or consecrate i
fears?
Never, thou second Self! Is confiden
So vain in virtue that I learn to dou
The mirror even of Truth? Dark flo
of Time,
Roll as it listeth thee; I measure no
By month or moments thy ambiguo
course.
Another may stand by me on thy brin
And watch the bubble whirled beyo
his ken,
Which pauses at my feet. The se
of love,
The thirst for action, and the i
passioned thought
Prolong my being; if I wake no more,
My life more actual living will conta

Than some gray veteran's of the world's cold school,
Whose listless hours unprofitably roll
By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed,
Virtue and Love! unbending Fortitude,
Freedom, Devotedness and Purity!
That life my Spirit consecrates to you.

SONNET

TO A BALLOON LADEN WITH KNOWLEDGE

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated August, 1812.]

Bright ball of flame that through the gloom of even
Silently takest thine aethereal way,
And with surpassing glory dimm'st each ray
Twinkling amid the dark blue depths of Heaven,—
Unlike the fire thou bearest, soon shalt thou
Fade like a meteor in surrounding gloom,
Whilst that, unquenchable, is doomed to glow
A watch-light by the patriot's lonely tomb;
A ray of courage to the oppressed and poor;
A spark, though gleaming on the hovel's hearth,
Which through the tyrant's gilded domes shall roar;
A beacon in the darkness of the Earth;
A sun which, o'er the renovated scene,
Shall dart like Truth where Falsehood yet has been.

SONNET

ON LAUNCHING SOME BOTTLES FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE INTO THE BRISTOL CHANNEL

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated August, 1812.]

Vessels of heavenly medicine! may the breeze
Auspicious waft your dark green forms to shore;
Safe may ye stem the wide surrounding roar
Of the wild whirlwinds and the raging seas;
And oh! if Liberty e'er deigned to stoop
From yonder lowly throne her crownless brow,
Sure she will breathe around your emerald group
The fairest breezes of her West that blow.
Yes! she will waft ye to some freeborn soul
Whose eye-beam, kindling as it meets your freight,
Her heaven-born flame in suffering Earth will light,
Until its radiance gleams from pole to pole,
And tyrant-hearts with powerless envy burst
To see their night of ignorance dispersed.

THE DEVIL'S WALK

A BALLAD

[Published as a broadside by Shelley, 1812.]

I

Once, early in the morning,
Beelzebub arose,
With care his sweet person adorning,
He put on his Sunday clothes.

II

He drew on a boot to hide his hoof,
He drew on a glove to hide his claw,
His horns were concealed by a *Bras Chapeau*,
And the Devil went forth as natty a *Beau*
As Bond-street ever saw.

III

He sate him down, in London town,
Before earth's morning ray;
With a favourite imp he began to chat,
On religion, and scandal, this and that,
Until the dawn of day.

IV

And then to St. James's Court he went,
And St. Paul's Church he took on his way;
He was mighty thick with every Saint,
Though they were formal and he was gay.

V

The Devil was an agriculturist,
And as bad weeds quickly grow,
In looking over his farm, I wist,
He wouldn't find cause for woe.

VI

He peeped in each hole, to each chamber stole,
His promising live-stock to view;
Grinning applause, he just showed them his claws,
And they shrunk with affright from his ugly sight,
Whose work they delighted to do.

VII

Satan poked his red nose into crannies so small
One would think that the innocents fair,
Poor lambkins! were just doing nothing at all
But settling some dress or arranging some ball,
But the Devil saw deeper there.

VIII

A Priest, at whose elbow the Devil during prayer
Sate familiarly, side by side,
Declared that, if the Tempter were there,
His presence he would not abide.
Ah! ah! thought Old Nick, that's a very stale trick,
For without the Devil, O favourite of Evil,
In your carriage you would not ride.

IX

Satan next saw a brainless King,
Whose house was as hot as his own;
Many Imps in attendance were the on the wing,
They flapped the pennon and twiste the sting,
Close by the very Throne.

X

Ah! ah! thought Satan, the pasture good,
My Cattle will here thrive bett than others;
They dine on news of human blood,
They sup on the groans of the dyi and dead,
And supperless never will go to bed;
Which will make them fat as the brothers.

XI

Fat as the Fiends that feed blood,
Fresh and warm from the fields Spain,
Where Ruin ploughs her go way,
Where the shoots of earth are nipp in the bud,
Where Hell is the Victor's prey,
Its glory the meed of the slain.

XII

Fat—as the Death-birds on Erin shore,
That glutted themselves in her deare gore,
And flitted round Castlereagh,
When they snatched the Patrio heart, that *his* grasp
Had torn from its widow's mani clasp,
And fled at the dawn of day.

XIII

Fat—as the Reptiles of the tomb,
That riot in corruption's spoil,
That fret their little hour in gloom,
And creep, and live the while.

XIV

Fat as that Prince's maudlin brain,
Which, addled by some gilded toy
Tired, gives his sweetmeat, and agai
Cries for it, like a humoured boy.

55 Where *cj. Rossetti*; When *1812*.

XV

For he is fat,—his waistcoat gay,
When strained upon a levee day,
Scarce meets across his princely paunch;
And pantaloons are like half-moons
Upon each brawny haunch.

XVI

How vast his stock of calf! when plenty
Had filled his empty head and heart,
Enough to satiate foplings twenty,
Could make his pantaloon seams start.

XVII

The Devil (who sometimes is called Nature),
For men of power provides thus well,
Whilst every change and every feature,
Their great original can tell.

XVIII

Satan saw a lawyer a viper slay,
That crawled up the leg of his table,
It reminded him most marvellously
Of the story of Cain and Abel.

XIX

The wealthy yeoman, as he wanders
His fertile fields among,
And on his thriving cattle ponders,
Counts his sure gains, and hums a song;
Thus did the Devil, through earth walking,
Hum low a hellish song.

XX

For they thrive well whose garb of gore
Is Satan's choicest livery,
And they thrive well who from the poor
Have snatched the bread of penury,
And heap the houseless wanderer's store
On the rank pile of luxury.

XXI

The Bishops thrive, though they are big;
The Lawyers thrive, though they are thin;
For every gown, and every wig,
Hides the safe thrift of Hell within.

XXII

Thus pigs were never counted clean,
Although they dine on finest corn;
And cormorants are sin-like lean,
Although they eat from night to morn.

XXIII

Oh! why is the Father of Hell in such glee,
As he grins from ear to ear?
Why does he doff his clothes joyfully,
As he skips, and prances, and flaps his wing,
As he sidles, leers, and twirls his sting,
And dares, as he is, to appear?

XXIV

A statesman passed—alone to him,
The Devil dare his whole shape uncover,
To show each feature, every limb,
Secure of an unchanging lover.

XXV

At this known sign, a welcome sight,
The watchful demons sought their King,
And every Fiend of the Stygian night,
Was in an instant on the wing.

XXVI

Pale Loyalty, his guilt-steeled brow,
With wreaths of gory laurel crowned:
The hell-hounds, Murder, Want and Woe,
Forever hungering, flocked around;
From Spain had Satan sought their food,
'Twas human woe and human blood!

XXVII

Hark! the earthquake's crash I hear,—
Kings turn pale, and Conquerors start,
Ruffians tremble in their fear,
For their Satan doth depart.

XXVIII

This day Fiends give to revelry
To celebrate their King's return,
And with delight its Sire to see
Hell's adamantine limits burn.

XXIX

But were the Devil's sight as keen
As Reason's penetrating eye,
His sulphurous Majesty I ween,
Would find but little cause for joy.

XXX

For the sons of Reason see
That, ere fate consume the Pole,
The false Tyrant's cheek shall be
Bloodless as his coward soul.

FRAGMENT OF A SONNET

FAREWELL TO NORTH DEVON

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. book) by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated August, 1812.]

. . . . . .

Where man's profane and tainting hand
Nature's primaeval loveliness has marred,
And some few souls of the high bliss debarred
Which else obey her powerful command;
. . . mountain piles
That load in grandeur Cambria's emerald vales.

ON LEAVING LONDON FOR WALES

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. book) by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated November, 1812.]

Hail to thee, Cambria! for the unfettered wind
Which from thy wilds even now methinks I feel,
Chasing the clouds that roll in wrath behind,
And tightening the soul's laxest nerves to steel;
True mountain Liberty alone may heal
The pain which Custom's obduracies bring,
And he who dares in fancy even to steal
One draught from Snowdon's eve sacred spring
Blots out the unholiest rede of worldly witnessing.

And shall that soul, to selfish peac resigned,
So soon forget the woe its fellow share?
Can Snowdon's Lethe from the freeborn mind
So soon the page of injured penury tear?
Does this fine mass of human passion dare
To sleep, unhonouring the patriot' fall,
Or life's sweet load in quietude t bear
While millions famish even i Luxury's hall,
And Tyranny, high raised, stern lower on all?

No, Cambria! never may thy matchless vales
A heart so false to hope and virtu shield;
Nor ever may thy spirit-breathin gales
Waft freshness to the slaves wh dare to yield.
For me! . . . the weapon that I bur to wield
I seek amid thy rocks to ruin hurled
That Reason's flag may over Freedom's field,
Symbol of bloodless victory, wav unfurled,
A meteor-sign of love effulgent o'er th world.

. . . . .

Do thou, wild Cambria, calm eac struggling thought;
Cast thy sweet veil of rocks an woods between,
That by the soul to indignatio wrought
Mountains and dells be mingled wit the scene;
Let me forever be what I have been
But not forever at my needy door

Let Misery linger speechless, pale and lean;
I am the friend of the unfriended poor,—
Let me not madly stain their righteous cause in gore.

THE WANDERING JEW'S SOLILOQUY

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. book) by Bertram Dobell, 1887.]

Is it the Eternal Triune, is it He
Who dares arrest the wheels of destiny
And plunge me in the lowest Hell of Hells?
Will not the lightning's blast destroy my frame?
Will not steel drink the blood-life where it swells?
No—let me hie where dark Destruction dwells,
To rouse her from her deeply caverned lair,
And, taunting her cursed sluggishness to ire,
Light long Oblivion's death-torch at its flame
And calmly mount Annihilation's pyre.
Tyrant of Earth! pale Misery's jackal Thou!
Are there no stores of vengeful violent fate
Within the magazines of Thy fierce hate?
No poison in the clouds to bathe a brow
That lowers on Thee with desperate contempt?
Where is the noonday Pestilence that slew
The myriad sons of Israel's favoured nation?
Where the destroying Minister that flew
Pouring the fiery tide of desolation
Upon the leagued Assyrian's attempt?
Where the dark Earthquake-daemon who engorged
At the dread word Korah's unconscious crew?
Or the Angel's two-edged sword of fire that urged
Our primal parents from their bower of bliss
(Reared by Thine hand) for errors not their own
By Thine omniscient mind foredoomed, foreknown?
Yes! I would court a ruin such as this,
Almighty Tyrant! and give thanks to Thee—
Drink deeply—drain the cup of hate; remit this—I may die.

EVENING

TO HARRIET

[Published by Dowden, *Lfie of Shelley*, 1887. Composed July 31, 1813.]

O THOU bright Sun! beneath the dark blue line
Of western distance that sublime descendest,
And, gleaming lovelier as thy beams decline,
Thy million hues to every vapour lendest,
And, over cobweb lawn and grove and stream
Sheddest the liquid magic of thy light,
Till calm Earth, with the parting splendour bright,
Shows like the vision of a beauteous dream;
What gazer now with astronomic eye
Could coldly count the spots within thy sphere?
Such were thy lover, Harriet, could he fly
The thoughts of all that makes his passion dear,
And, turning senseless from thy warm caress,
Pick flaws in our close-woven happiness.

TO IANTHE

[Published by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887. Composed September, 1813.]

I LOVE thee, Baby! for thine own sweet sake;
Those azure eyes, that faintly dimpled cheek,

Thy tender frame, so eloquently weak,
Love in the sternest heart of hate might wake;
But more when o'er thy fitful slumber bending
Thy mother folds thee to her wakeful heart,
Whilst love and pity, in her glances blending,
All that thy passive eyes can feel impart:
More, when some feeble lineaments of her,
Who bore thy weight beneath her spotless bosom,
As with deep love I read thy face, recur,—
More dear art thou, O fair and fragile blossom;
Dearest when most thy tender traits express
The image of thy mother's loveliness.

SONG FROM THE WANDERING JEW

[Published as Shelley's by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847, i. p. 58.]

See yon opening flower
Spreads its fragrance to the blast;
It fades within an hour,
Its decay is pale—is fast.
Paler is yon maiden;
Faster is her heart's decay;
Deep with sorrow laden,
She sinks in death away.

FRAGMENT FROM THE WANDERING JEW

[Published as Shelley's by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847, i. p. 56.]

The Elements respect their Maker's seal!
Still like the scathèd pine tree's height,
Braving the tempests of the night
Have I 'scaped the flickering flame.
Like the scathed pine, which a monument stands
Of faded grandeur, which the brands
Of the tempest-shaken air
Have riven on the desolate heath;
Yet it stands majestic even in death,
And rears its wild form there.

TO THE QUEEN OF MY HEART

[Published as Shelley's by Medwin *The Shelley Papers*, 1833, and by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.; afterwards suppressed as of doubtful authenticity.]

I

Shall we roam, my love,
To the twilight grove,
When the moon is rising bright;
Oh, I'll whisper there,
In the cool night-air,
What I dare not in broad daylight!

II

I'll tell thee a part
Of the thoughts that start
To being when thou art nigh;
And thy beauty, more bright
Than the stars' soft light,
Shall seem as a weft from the sky.

III

When the pale moonbeam
On tower and stream
Sheds a flood of silver sheen,
How I love to gaze
As the cold ray strays
O'er thy face, my heart's throned queen!

IV

Wilt thou roam with me
To the restless sea,
And linger upon the steep,
And list to the flow
Of the waves below
How they toss and roar and leap?

V

Those boiling waves,
And the storm that raves
At night o'er their foaming crest,
Resemble the strife
That, from earliest life,
The passions have waged in my breast.

VI

Oh, come then, and rove
To the sea or the grove,
When the moon is rising bright;
And I'll whisper there,
In the cool night-air,
What I dare not in broad daylight.

NOTES

ON THE TEXT AND ITS PUNCTUATION

In the case of every poem published during Shelley's lifetime, the text of this edition is based upon that of the *editio princeps* or earliest issue. Wherever our text deviates verbally from this exemplar, the word or words of the *editio princeps* will be found recorded in a footnote. In like manner, wherever the text of the poems first printed by Mrs. Shelley in the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824 or the *Poetical Works* of 1839 is modified by MS. authority or otherwise, the reading of the earliest printed text has been subjoined in a footnote. Shelley's punctuation—or what may be presumed to be his—has been retained, save in the case of errors (whether of the transcriber or the printer) overlooked in the revision of the proof-sheets, and of a few places where the pointing, though certainly or seemingly Shelley's, tends to obscure the sense or grammatical construction. In the following notes the more important textual difficulties are briefly discussed, and the readings embodied in the text of this edition, it is hoped, sufficiently justified. An attempt has also been made to record the original punctuation where it is here departed from.

(1) Page 1.

THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD: Part I

The following paragraph, relating to this poem, closes Shelley's *Preface* to *Alastor*, etc., 1816:—'The Fragment entitled *The Daemon of the World* is a detached part of a poem which the author does not intend for publication. The metre in which it is composed is that of *Samson Agonistes* and the Italian pastoral drama, and may be considered as the natural measure into which poetical conceptions, expressed in harmonious language, necessarily fall.'

(2) Page 2.

Lines 56, 112, 184, 288. The editor has added a comma at the end of these lines, and a period (for the comma of 1816) after *by*, l. 279.

(3) Page 4.

Lines 167, 168. The *ed. prin.* has a comma after *And*, l. 167, and *heaven*, l. 168.

(1) Page 7.

THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD: Part II

Printed by Mr. Forman from a copy in his possession of *Queen Mab*, corrected by Shelley's hand. See *The Shelley Library*, pp. 36–44, for a detailed history and description of this copy.

(2) Page 10.

Lines 436–438. Mr. Forman prints:—

Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Draws on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift, etc.

Our text exhibits both variants—*lore* for 'store,' and *Dawns* for 'Draws'—found in Shelley's note on the corresponding passage of *Queen Mab* (viii. 204–206). See editor's note on this passage. Shelley's comma after *infiniteness*, l. 438, is omitted as tending to obscure the construction.

(1) Page 14.

ALASTOR; OR THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Preface. For the concluding paragraph see editor's note (1) on *The Daemon of the World*: Part I.

(2) Page 20.

Conducts, O Sleep, to thy, etc.
(l. 219.)

The Shelley texts, 1816, 1824, 1839, have *Conduct* here, which Forman and Dowden retain. The suggestion that Shelley may have written 'death's blue *vaults*' (l. 216) need not, in the face of 'the dark *gate* of death' (l. 211), be seriously considered; *Conduct* must, therefore, be regarded as a fault in grammar. That Shelley actually wrote *Conduct* is not impossible, for his grammar is not seldom faulty (see, for instance, *Revolt of Islam, Dedication*, l. 60); but it is most improbable that he would have committed a solecism so striking both to eye and ear. Rossetti and Woodberry print *Conducts*, etc. The final *s* is often a vanishing quantity in Shelley's MSS. Or perhaps the compositor's hand was misled by his eye, which may have dropped on the words, *Conduct to thy*, etc., seven lines above.

(3) Page 22.

Of wave ruining on wave, etc.
(l. 327.)

For *ruining* the text of *P.W.*, 1839, both edd., has *running*—an overlooked misprint, surely, rather than a conjectural emendation. For an example of *ruining* as an intransitive (='falling in ruins,' or, simply, 'falling in streams') see *Paradise Lost*, vi. 867–869:—

> Hell heard th' insufferable noise, Hell saw
> Heav'n ruining from Heav'n, and would have fled
> Affrighted, etc.

Ruining, in the sense of 'streaming,' 'trailing,' occurs in Coleridge's *Melancholy: a Fragment* (Sibylline Leaves, 1817, p. 262):—

> Where ruining ivies propped the ruins steep—

Melancholy first appeared in *The Morning Post*, Dec. 7, 1797, where, through an error identical with that here assumed in the text of 1839, *running* appears in place of *ruining*—the word intended, and doubtless written, by Coleridge.

(4) Page 22.

Line 349. With Mr. Stopford Brooke, the editor substitutes here a colon for the full stop which, in edd. 1816, 1824, and 1839, follows *ocean*. Forman and Dowden retain the full stop; Rossetti and Woodberry substitute a semicolon.

(5) Page 26.

> *And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines*
> *Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots*
> *The unwilling soil.*

(ll. 530–532.)

Edd. 1816, 1824, and 1839 have *roots* (l. 530)—a palpable misprint, the probable origin of which may be seen in the line which follows. Rossetti conjectures *trunks*, but *stumps* or *stems* may have been Shelley's word.

(6) Page 26.

Lines 543–548. This somewhat involved passage is here reprinted exactly as it stands in the *ed. prin.*, save for the comma after *and*, l. 546, first introduced by Dowden, 1890. The construction and meaning are fully discussed by Forman (*P. W. of Shelley*, ed. 1876, vol. i. pp. 39, 40), Stopford

Brooke (*Poems of Shelley*, G. T. S., 1880, p. 323), Dobell (*Alastor*, &c., *Facsimile Reprint*, 2nd ed. 1887, pp. xxii–xxvii), and Woodberry (*Complete P. W. of Shelley*, 1893, vol. i. p. 413).

(1) Page 31.

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

The revised text (1818) of this poem is given here, as being that which Shelley actually published. In order to reconvert the text of *The Revolt of Islam* into that of *Laon and Cythna*, the reader must make the following alterations in the text. At the end of the *Preface* add :—

'In the personal conduct of my Hero and Heroine, there is one circumstance which was intended to startle the reader from the trance of ordinary life. It was my object to break through the crust of those outworn opinions on which established institutions depend. I have appealed therefore to the most universal of all feelings, and have endeavoured to strengthen the moral sense, by forbidding it to waste its energies in seeking to avoid actions which are only crimes of convention. It is because there is so great a multitude of artificial vices that there are so few real virtues. Those feelings alone which are benevolent or malevolent, are essentially good or bad. The circumstance of which I speak was introduced, however, merely to accustom men to that charity and toleration which the exhibition of a practice widely differing from their own has a tendency to promote[1]. Nothing indeed can be more mischievous than many actions, innocent in themselves, which might bring down upon individuals the bigoted contempt and rage of the multitude.'

P. 58, II. xxi. 1 :
I had a little sister whose fair eyes

P. 59, II. xxv. 2 :
To love in human life, this sister sweet,

P. 64, III. i. 1 :
What thoughts had sway over my sister's slumber

P. 64, III. i. 3 :
As if they did ten thousand years outnumber

P. 78, IV. xxx. 6 :
And left it vacant—'twas her brother's face—

P. 89, V. xlvii. 5 :
I had a brother once, but he is dead!—

P. 99, VI. xxiv. 8 :
My own sweet sister looked), with joy did quail,

P. 100, VI. xxxi. 6 :
The common blood which ran within our frames,

P. 102, VI. xxxix. 6–9 :
With such close sympathies, for to each other
Had high and solemn hopes, the gentle might
Of earliest love, and all the thoughts which smother
Cold Evil's power, now linked a sister and a brother.

P. 102, VI. xl. 1 :
And such is Nature's modesty, that those

P. 115, VIII. iv. 9 :
Dream ye that God thus builds for man in solitude?

P. 115, VIII. v. 1 :
What then is God? Ye mock yourselves and give

---

[1] The sentiments connected with and characteristic of this circumstance have no personal reference to the Writer.—[Shelley's Note.]

P. 115, VIII. vi. 1:
What then is God? Some moon-struck sophist stood

P. 115, VIII. vi. 8, 9:
And that men say God has appointed Death
On all who scorn his will to wreak immortal wrath.

P. 115, VIII. vii. 1–4:
Men say they have seen God, and heard from God,
Or known from others who have known such things,
And that his will is all our law, a rod
To scourge us into slaves—that Priests and Kings

P. 116, VIII. viii. 1:
And it is said, that God will punish wrong;

P. 116, VIII. viii. 3, 4:
And his red hell's undying snakes among
Will bind the wretch on whom he fixed a stain

P. 117, VIII. xiii. 3, 4:
For it is said God rules both high and low,
And man is made the captive of his brother;

P. 123, IX. xiii. 8:
To curse the rebels. To their God did they

P. 123, IX. xiv. 6
By God, and Nature, and Necessity.

P. 124, IX. xv. The stanza contains ten lines—ll. 4–7 as follows:
There was one teacher, and must ever be,
They said, even God, who, the necessity
Of rule and wrong had armed against mankind,
His slave and his avenger there to be;

P. 124, IX. xviii. 3–6:
And Hell and Awe, which in the heart of man
Is God itself; the Priests its downfall knew,
As day by day their altars lovelier grew,
Till they were left alone within the fane;

P. 133, X. xxii. 9:
On fire! Almighty God his hell on earth has spread!

P. 134, X. xxvi. 7, 8:
Of their Almighty God, the armies wind
In sad procession: each among the train

P. 134, X. xxviii. 1:
O God Almighty! thou alone hast power.

P. 135, X. xxxi. 1:
And Oromaze, and Christ, and Mahomet,

P. 135, X. xxxii. 1:
He was a Christian Priest from whom it came

P. 135, X. xxxii. 4:
To quell the rebel Atheists; a dire guest

P. 135, X. xxxii. 9:
To wreak his fear of God in vengeance on mankind

P. 135, X. xxxiv. 5, 6:
His cradled Idol, and the sacrifice
Of God to God's own wrath—that Islam's creed

P. 136, X. xxxv. 9:
And thrones, which rest on faith in God, nigh overturned.

P. 136, X. xxxix. 4:
Of God may be appeased. He ceased, and they

P. 137, X. xl. 5:
With storms and shadows girt, sate God, alone,

P. 138, X. xliv. 9:
As 'hush! hark! Come they yet? God, God, thine hour is near!'

P. 138, X. xlv. 8:
Men brought their atheist kindred to appease

P. 138, X. xlvii. 6:
The threshold of God's throne, and it was she!

P. 142, XI. xvi. 1:
Ye turn to God for aid in your distress;

P. 144, XI. xxv. 7:
Swear by your dreadful God.'—
'We swear, we swear!'

P. 146, XII. x. 9:
Truly for self, thus thought that Christian Priest indeed,

P. 146, XII. xi. 9:
A woman? God has sent his other victim here.

P. 146, XII. xii. 6–8:
Will I stand up before God's golden throne,
And cry, 'O Lord, to thee did I betray
An Atheist; but for me she would have known

P. 150, XII. xxix. 4:
In torment and in fire have Atheists gone;

P. 150, XII. xxx. 4:
How Atheists and Republicans can die;

(2) Page 39.

Aught but a lifeless clod, until revived by thee (*Dedic.* vi. 9).

So Rossetti; the Shelley edd., 1818 and 1839, read *clog*, which is retained by Forman, Dowden, and Woodberry. Rossetti's happy conjecture, *clod*, seems to Forman 'a doubtful emendation, as Shelley may have used *clog* in its [figurative] sense of *weight, encumbrance.*'—Hardly, as here, in a poetical figure: that would be to use a metaphor within a metaphor. Shelley compares his heart to a concrete object: if *clog* is right, the word must be taken in one or other of its two recognized *literal* senses—'a wooden shoe,' or 'a block of wood tied round the neck or to the leg of a horse or a dog.' Again, it is of others' hearts, not of his own, that Shelley here deplores the icy coldness and weight; besides, how could he appropriately describe his heart as a *weight* or *encumbrance* upon the free play of impulse and emotion, seeing that for Shelley, above all men, the heart was itself the main source and spring of all feeling and action? That source, he complains, has been dried up—its emotions desiccated—by the crushing impact of other hearts, heavy, hard and cold as stone. His heart has become withered and barren, like a lump of earth parched with frost—'a lifeless clod.' Compare *Summer and Winter*, lines 11–15:—

'It was a winter such as when birds die
In the deep forests; and the fishes lie
Stiffened in the translucent ice, *which makes*
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
A wrinkled clod as hard as brick;' etc., etc.

The word *revived* suits well with *clod*; but what is *a revived clog*? Finally, the first two lines of the following stanza (vii.) seem decisive in favour of Rossetti's word.

If any one wonders how a misprint overlooked in 1818 could, after twenty-one years, still remain undiscovered in 1839, let him consider the case of *clog* in Lamb's parody on Southey's and Coleridge's *Dactyls* (Lamb, *Letter to Coleridge*, July 1, 1796):—

Sorely your Dactyls do drag along limp-footed;
Sad is the measure that hangs a *clog* round 'em so, etc., etc.

Here the misprint, *clod*, which in 1868 appeared in Moxon's edition of the *Letters of Charles Lamb*, has through five successive editions and under many editors—including Fitzgerald, Ainger, and Macdonald—held its ground even to the present day; and this, notwithstanding the preservation of the true reading, *clog*, in the texts of Talfourd and Carew Hazlitt. Here then is the case of a palpable misprint surviving, despite positive external evidence of its falsity, over a period of thirty-six years.

(3) PAGE 39.

And walked as free, etc. (*Ded.* vii. 6).

Walked is one of Shelley's occasional grammatical laxities. Forman well observes that *walkedst*, the right word here, would naturally seem to Shelley more heinous than a breach of syntactic rule. Rossetti and, after him, Dowden print *walk*. Forman and Woodberry follow the early texts.

(4) PAGES 42, 43.

I. ix. 1–7. Here the text follows the punctuation of the *ed. prin.*, 1818, with two exceptions: a comma is inserted (1) after *scale* (l. 201), on the authority of the Bodleian MS. (Locock); and (2) after *neck* (l. 205), to indicate the true construction. Mrs. Shelley's text, 1839, has a semicolon after *plumes* (l. 203), which Rossetti adopts. Forman (1892) departs from the pointing of Shelley's edition here, placing a period at the close of line 199, and a dash after *blended* (l. 200).

(5) PAGE 43.

What life, what power, was, etc. (I. xi. 1.)

The *ed. prin.*, 1818, wants the commas here.

(6) PAGE 46.

. . . and now
We are embarked—the mountains hang and frown
Over the starry deep that gleams below,
A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go. (I. xxiii. 6–9.)

With Woodberry I substitute after *embarked* (7) a dash for the comma of the *ed. prin.*; with Rossetti I restore to *below* (8) a comma which I believe to have been overlooked by the printer of that edition. Shelley's meaning I take to be that 'a vast and dim expanse of mountain hangs frowning over the starry deep that gleams below it as we pass over the waves.'

(7) PAGE 47.

As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,— (I. xxviii. 9.)

So Forman (1892), Dowden; the *ed. prin.* has a full stop at the close of the line,—where, according to Mr. Locock, no point appears in the Bodl. MS.

(8) PAGE 47.

Black-wingèd demon forms, etc. (I. xxx. 7.)

The Bodl. MS. exhibits the requisite hyphen here, and in *golden-pinioned* (xxxii. 2).

(9) PAGE 47.

I. xxxi. 2, 6. The 'three-dots' point, employed by Shelley to indicate a pause longer than that of a full stop, is introduced into these two lines on the authority of the Bodl. MS. In both cases it replaces a dash in the *ed. princeps*. See list of punctual variations below. Mr. Locock reports the presence in the MS. of what he justly terms a 'characteristic' comma after *Soon* (xxxi. 2).

(10) Page 49.

. . . mine shook beneath the wide
emotion. (I. xxxviii. 9.)

For *emotion* the Bodl. MS. has *commotion* (Locock)—perhaps the fitter word here.

(11) Page 49.

Deep slumber fell on me:—my
dreams were fire— (I. xl. 1.)

The dash after *fire* is from the Bodl. MS.,—where, moreover, the somewhat misleading but indubitably Shelleyan comma after *passion* (*ed. prin.*, xl. 4) is wanting (Locock). I have added a dash to the comma after *cover* (xl. 5) in order to clarify the sense.

(12) Page 50.

And shared in fearless deeds with
evil men, (I. xliv. 4.)

With Forman and Dowden I substitute here a comma for the full stop of the *ed. princeps*. See also list of punctual variations below (stanza xliv).

(13) Page 50.

The Spirit whom I loved, in solitude
Sustained his child: (I. xlv. 4, 5.)

The comma here, important as marking the sense as well as the rhythm of the passage, is derived from the Bodl. MS. (Locock).

(14) Page 51.

I looked, and we were sailing
pleasantly,
Swift as a cloud between the sea
and sky;
Beneath the rising moon seen far
away,
Mountains of ice, etc.
(I. xlvii. 4–7.)

The *ed. prin.* has a comma after *sky* (5) and a semicolon after *away* (6)—a pointing followed by Forman, Dowden, and Woodberry. By transposing these points (as in our text), however, a much better sense is obtained; and, luckily, this better sense proves to be that yielded by the Bodl. MS., where, Mr. Locock reports, there is a semicolon after *sky* (5), a comma after *moon* (6), and no point whatsoever after *away* (6).

(15) Page 51.

Girt by the deserts of the Universe;
(I. l. 4.)

For the full stop at *Universe* (*ed. prin.*) Woodberry (1893) substituted a semicolon, the point exhibited here by the Bodl. MS.

(16) Page 60.

Hymns which my soul had woven
to Freedom, strong
The source of passion, whence they
rose, to be;
Triumphant strains, which, etc.
(II. xxviii. 6–8.)

The *ed. prin.*, followed by Forman, has *passion whence* (7). Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.* 1839, both edd., prints: *strong The source of passion, whence they rose to be Triumphant strains, which*, etc.

(17) Page 64.

But, pale, were calm with passion
—thus subdued, etc.
(II. xlix. 6.)

With Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, I add a comma after *But* to the pointing of the *ed. prin.* Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, both edd., prints: *But pale, were calm. —With passion thus subdued*, etc.

(18) Page 69.

Methought that grate was lifted,
etc. (III. xxv. 1.)

Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's edd. have *gate*, which is retained by Forman. But cf. III. xiv. 2, 7. Dowden and Woodberry follow Rossetti in printing *grate*.

(19) Page 77.

Where her own standard, etc.
(IV. xxiv. 5.)

So Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, both edd.

(20) PAGE 92.

Beneath whose spires, which swayed
in the red flame, (V. liv. 6.)

Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's edd. (1818, 1839) give *red light* here,—an oversight perpetuated by Forman, the rhyme-words *name* (8) and *frame* (9) notwithstanding. With Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, I print *red flame*,—an obvious emendation proposed by Fleay.

(21) PAGE 95.

—when the waves smile,
As sudden earthquakes light many
a volcano-isle,
Thus sudden, unexpected feast was
spread, etc.
(VI. vii. 8, 9; viii. 1.)

With Forman, Dowden, Woodberry, I substitute after *isle* (vii. 9) a comma for the full stop of edd. 1818, 1839 (retained by Rossetti). The passage is obscure: perhaps Shelley wrote '*lift* many a volcano-isle.' The plain becomes studded in an instant with piles of corpses, even as the smiling surface of the sea will sometimes become studded in an instant with many islands uplifted by a sudden shock of earthquake.

(22) PAGE 107.

VII. vii. 2–6. The *ed. prin.* punctuates thus:—

and words it gave
Gestures and looks, such as in
whirlwinds bore
Which might not be withstood,
whence none could save
All who approached their sphere,
like some calm wave
Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms
beneath;

This punctuation is retained by Forman; Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, place a comma after *gave* (2) and *Gestures* (3), and—adopting the suggestion of Mr. A. C. Bradley—enclose line 4 (*Which might . . . could save*) in parentheses; thus construing *which might not be withstood* and *whence none could save* as adjectival clauses qualifying *whirlwinds* (3), and taking *bore* (3) as a transitive verb governing *All who approached their sphere* (5). This, which I believe to be the true construction, is perhaps indicated quite as clearly by the pointing adopted in the text—a pointing moreover which, on metrical grounds, is, I think, preferable to that proposed by Mr. Bradley. I have added a dash to the comma after *sphere* (5), to indicate that it is *Cythna* herself (and not *All who approached*, etc.) that resembles *some calm wave*, etc.

(23) PAGE 110.

Which dwell in lakes, when the red
moon on high
Pause ere it wakens tempest;—
(VII. xxii. 6, 7.)

Here *when the moon Pause* is clearly irregular, but it appears in edd. 1818, 1839, and is undoubtedly Shelley's phrase. Rossetti cites a conjectural emendation by a certain 'C. D. Campbell, Mauritius':—*which the red moon on high Pours ere it wakens tempest;* but cf. *Julian and Maddalo*, ll. 53, 54:—

Meanwhile the sun paused ere it
should alight,
Over the horizon of the mountains.

—and *Prince Athanase*, ll. 220, 221:—

When the curved moon then lin-
gering in the west
Paused, in yon waves her mighty
horns to wet, etc.

(24) Page 112.

—time imparted
Such power to me—I became fearless-hearted, etc.
(VII. xxx. 4, 5.)

With Woodberry I replace with a dash the comma (*ed. prin.*) after *me* (5) retained by Forman, deleted by Rossetti and Dowden. Shelley's (and Forman's) punctuation leaves the construction ambiguous; with Woodberry's the two clauses are seen to be parallel—the latter being appositive to and explanatory of the former; while with Dowden's the clauses are placed in correlation: *time imparted such power to me that I became fearless-hearted.*

(25) Page 112.

Of love, in that lorn solitude, etc.
(VII. xxxii. 7.)

All edd. prior to 1876 have *lone solitude*, etc. The important emendation *lorn* was first introduced into the text by Forman, from Shelley's revised copy of *Laon and Cythna*, where *lone* is found to be turned into *lorn* by the poet's own hand.

(26) Page 117.

And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother, etc.
(VIII. xiii. 5.)

So the *ed. prin.*; Forman, Dowden, Woodberry, following the text of *Laon and Cythna*, 1818, read, *Fear his mother.* Forman refers to X. xlii. 4, 5, where *Fear* figures as a female, and *Hate* as 'her mate and foe.' But consistency in such matters was not one of Shelley's characteristics, and there seems to be no need for alteration here. Mrs. Shelley (1839) and Rossetti follow the *ed. princeps.*

(27) Page 120.

The ship fled fast till the stars 'gan to fail,
And, round me gathered, etc.
(VIII. xxvi. 5, 6.)

The *ed. prin.* has no comma after *And* (6). Mrs. Shelley (1839) places a full stop at *fail* (5) and reads, *All round me gathered*, etc.

(28) Page 123.

Words which the lore of truth in hues of flame, etc.
(IX. xii. 6.)

The *ed. prin.*, followed by Rossetti and Woodberry, has *hues of grace* [cf. note (20) above]; Forman and Dowden read *hues of flame.* For instances of a rhyme-word doing double service, see IX. xxxiv. 6, 9 (*thee . . . thee*); VI. iii. 2, 4 (*arms . . . arms*); X. v. 1, 3 (*came . . . came*).

(29) Page 129.

Led them, thus erring, from their native land; (X. v. 6.)

Edd. 1818, 1839 read *home* for *land* here. All modern editors adopt Fleay's cj., *land* [rhyming with *band* (8), *sand* (9)].

(30) Page 141.

XI. xi. 7. Rossetti and Dowden, following Mrs. Shelley (1839), print *writhed* here.

(31) Page 151.

When the broad sunrise, etc.
(XII. xxxiv. 3.)

When is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by Dowden) for *Where* (1818, 1839), which Forman and Woodberry retain. In XI. xxiv. 1, XII. xv. 2 and XII. xxviii. 7 *there* is Forman's cj. for *then* (1818).

(32) Page 152.

a golden mist did quiver
Where its wild surges with the lake were blended,—
(XII. xl. 3, 4.)

Where is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by Forman and Dowden) for *When* (edd. 1818, 1839; Woodberry). See also list of punctual variations below.

(33) PAGE 153.

Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended, etc. (XII. xl. 5.)

Here *on a line* is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by all editors) for *one line* (edd. 1818, 1839). See also list of punctual variations below.

(34) *List of Punctual Variations.*

Obvious errors of the press excepted, our text reproduces the punctuation of Shelley's edition (1818), save where the sense is likely to be perverted or obscured thereby. The following list shows where the pointing of the text varies from that of the *editio princeps* (1818) which is in every instance recorded here.

DEDICATION, vii. *long.* (9).

CANTO I. ix. *scale* (3), *neck* (7) xi. *What life what power* (1) xxii. *boat,* (8), *lay.* (9) xxiii. *embarked,* (7), *below A vast* (8, 9) xxvi. *world* (1), *chaos: Lo!* (2) xxviii. *life:* (2), *own.* (9) xxix. *mirth,* (6) xxx. *language* (2), *But, when* (5) xxxi. *foundations—soon* (2), *war— thrones* (6), *multitude,* (7) xxxii. *flame,* (4) xxxiii. *lightnings* (3), *truth,* (5), *brood,* (5), *hearts,* (8) xxxiv. *Fiend* (6) xxxv. *keep* (8) xxxvii. *mountains—* (8) xxxviii. *unfold,* (1), *woe:* (4), *show,* (5) xxxix. *gladness,* (6) xl. *fire,* (1), *cover,* (5), *far* (6) xlii. *kiss.* (9) xliii. *But* (5) xliv. *men.* (4), *fame;* (7) xlv. *loved* (4) xlvii. *sky,* (5), *away;* (6) xlix. *dream,* (2) l. *Universe.* (4), *language* (6) liv. *blind.* (4) lvii. *mine—He* (8) lviii. *said—* (5) lx. *tongue,* (9).

CANTO II. i. *which* (4) iii. *Yet flattering power had* (7) iv. *lust,* (6) vi. *kind,* (2) xi. *Nor,* (2) xiii. *ruin.* (3), *trust.* (9) xviii. *friend* (3) xxii. *thought,* (6), *fancies* (7) xxiv. *radiancy,* (3) xxv. *dells,* (8) xxvi. *waste,* (4) xxviii. *passion* (7) xxxi. *yet* (4) xxxii. *which* (3) xxxiii. *blight* (8), *who* (8) xxxvii. *seat;* (7) xxxix. *not—'wherefore* (1) xl. *good,* (5) xli. *tears* (7) xliii. *air* (2) xlvi. *fire,* (3) xlvii. *stroke,* (2) xlix. *But* (6).

CANTO III. i. *dream,* (4) iii. *shown* (7), *That* (9) iv. *when,* (3) v. *ever* (7) vii. *And* (1) xvi. *Below* (6) xix. *if* (4) xxv. *thither,* (2) xxvi. *worm* (2), *there,* (3) xxvii. *beautiful,* (8) xxviii. *And* (1) xxx. *As* (1).

CANTO IV. ii. *fallen—We* (6) iii. *ray,* (7) iv. *sleep,* (5) viii. *fed* (6) x. *wide;* (1), *sword* (7) xvi. *chance,* (7) xix. *her* (3), *blending* (8) xxiii. *tyranny,* (4) xxiv. *unwillingly* (1) xxvi. *blood;* (2) xxvii. *around* (2), *as* (4) xxxi. *or* (4) xxxiii. *was* (5).

CANTO V. i. *flow,* (5) ii. *profound—Oh,* (4), *veiled,* (6) iii. *victory* (1), *face—* (8) iv. *swim,* (5) vi. *spread,* (2), *outsprung* (5), *far,* (6), *war,* (8) viii. *avail* (5) x. *weep;* (4), *tents* (8) xi. *lives,* (8) xiii. *beside* (1) xv. *sky,* (3) xvii. *love* (4) xx. *Which* (9) xxii. *gloom,* (8) xxiii. *King* (6) xxvii. *known,* (4) xxxiii. *ye?* (1), *Othman—* (3) xxxiv. *pure—* (7) xxxv. *people* (1) xxxvi. *where* (3) xxxviii. *quail;* (2) xxxix. *society,* (8) xl. *see* (1) xliii. *light* (8), *throne.* (9) l. *skies,* (6) li. *Image* (7), *isles; all* (9), *amaze. When* (9, 10), *fair.* (12) li. 1: *will* (15), *train* (15) li. 2: *wert,* (5) li. 4: *brethren* (1) li. 5: *steaming,* (6) lv. *creep.* (9).

CANTO VI. i. *snapped* (9) ii. *gate,* (2) v. *rout* (4), *voice,* (6), *looks,* (6) vi. *as* (1) vii. *prey,* (1), *isle.* (9) viii. *sight* (2) xii. *glen*

(4) xiv. *almost* (1), *dismounting* (4) xv. *blood* (2) xxi. *reins:—We* (3), *word* (3) xxii. *crest* (6) xxv. *And,* (1), *and* (9) xxviii. *but* (3), *there,* (8) xxx. *air.* (9) xxxii. *voice:—* (1) xxxvii. *frames;* (5) xliii. *mane,* (2), *again,* (7) xlviii. *Now* (8) li. *hut,* (4) liv. *waste,* (7).

Canto VII. ii. *was,* (5) vi. *dreams* (3) vii. *gave Gestures and* (2, 3), *withstood,* (4), *save* (4), *sphere,* (5) viii. *sent,* (2) xiv. *taught,* (6), *sought,* (8) xvii. *and* (6) xviii. *own* (5), *beloved:—* (5) xix. *tears;* (2), *which,* (3), *appears,* (5) xxv. *me,* (1), *shapes* (5) xxvii. *And* (1) xxviii. *strength* (1) xxx. *Aye,* (3), *me,* (5) xxxiii. *pure* (9) xxxviii. *wracked;* (4), *cataract,* (5).

Canto VIII. ii. *and* (2) ix. *shadow* (5) xi. *freedom* (7), *blood.* (9) xiii. *Woman,* (8), *bond-slave,* (8) xiv. *pursuing* (8), *wretch!* (9) xv. *home,* (3) xxi. *Hate,* (1) xxiii. *reply,* (1) xxv. *fairest,* (1) xxvi. *And* (6) xxviii. *thunder* (2).

Canto IX. iv. *hills,* (1), *brood,* (6) v. *port—alas!* (1) viii. *grave* (2) ix. *with friend* (3), *occupations* (7), *overnumber,* (8) xii. *lair;* (5), *Words,* (6) xv. *who,* (4), *armed,* (5), *misery.* (9) xvii. *call,* (4) xx. *truth* (9) xxii. *sharest;* (4) xxiii. *Faith,* (8) xxviii. *conceive* (8) xxx. *and as* (5), *hope* (8) xxxiii. *thoughts:—Come* (7) xxxiv. *willingly* (2) xxxv. *ceased,* (8) xxxvi. *undight;* (4).

Canto X. ii. *tongue,* (1) vii. *conspirators* (6), *wolves,* (8) viii. *smiles,* (5) ix. *bands,* (2) xi. *file did* (5) xviii. *but* (5) xix. *brought,* (5) xxiv. *food* (5) xxix. *worshippers* (3) xxxii. *west* (2) xxxvi. *foes,* (5) xxxviii. *now!* (2) xl. *alone,* (5) xli. *morn—at* (1) xlii. *below,* (2) xliii. *deep,* (7), *pest* (8) xliv. *drear* (8) xlvii. *'Kill me!' they* (9) xlviii. *died,* (8).

Canto XI. iv. *which,* (6), *eyes,* (8) v. *tenderness* (7) vii. *return—the* (8) viii. *midnight—* (1) x. *multitude* (1) xi. *cheeks* (1), *here* (4) xii. *come, give* (3) xiii. *many* (1) xiv. *arrest,* (4), *terror,* (6) xix. *thus* (1) xx. *Stranger: 'What* (5) xxiii. *People:* (7).

Canto XII. iii. *and like* (7) vii. *away* (7) viii. *Fairer it seems than* (7) x. *self,* (9) xi. *divine* (2), *beauty—* (3) xii. *own.* (9) xiv. *fear,* (1), *choose,* (4) xvii. *death? the* (1) xix. *radiance* (3) xxii. *spake;* (5) xxv. *thee beloved;—* (8) xxvi. *towers* (6) xxviii. *repent,* (2) xxix. *withdrawn,* (2) xxxi. *stood a winged Thought* (1) xxxii. *gossamer,* (6) xxxiii. *stream* (1) xxxiv. *sunrise,* (3), *gold,* (3), *quiver,* (4) xxxv. *abode,* (4) xxxvii. *wonderful;* (3), *go,* (4) xl. *blended:* (4), *heavens,* (6), *lake;* (6).

PRINCE ATHANASE

(1) Page 157.

Lines 28–30. The punctuation here (*P. W.*, 1839) is supported by the Bodleian MS., which has a full stop at *relief* (l. 28), and a comma at *chief* (l. 30). The text of the *Posth. Poems,* 1824, has a semicolon at *relief* and a full stop at *chief.* The original draft of ll. 29, 30, in the Bodleian MS., runs :—

> *He was the child of fortune and*
> *of power,*
> *And, though of a high race the*
> *orphan Chief,* etc.

—which is decisive in favour of our punctuation (1839). See Locock, *Examination,* etc., p. 51.

(2) Page 158.

> *Which wake and feed an ever-*
> *living woe,—* (l. 74.)

All the edd. have *on* for *an*, the reading of the Bodl. MS., where it appears as a substitute for *his*, the word originally written. The first draft of the line runs: *Which nursed and fed his everliving woe. Wake*, accordingly, is to be construed as a transitive (Locock).

(3) Pages 159, 160.

Lines 130–169. This entire passage is distinctly cancelled in the Bodl. MS., where the following revised version of ll. 125–129 and 168–181 is found some way later on:—

Prince Athanase had one belovèd friend,
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend
With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light
Was the reflex of many minds; he filled
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and [*lost*],
The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child;
And soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.
And sweet and subtle talk they evermore
The pupil and the master [*share*], *until*
Sharing that undiminishable store,
The youth, as clouds athwart a grassy hill
Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran
His teacher, and did teach with native skill
Strange truths and new to that experienced man;
So [?] *they were friends, as few have ever been*
Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.

The words bracketed above, and in *Fragment* v. of our text, are cancelled in the MS. (Locock).

(4) Page 160.

And blighting hope, etc. (l. 152.)

The word *blighting* here, noted as unsuitable by Rossetti, is cancelled in the Bodl. MS. (Locock).

(5) Page 160.

She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath, etc. (l. 154.)

The reading of edd. 1824, 1839 (*beneath the chestnuts*) is a palpable misprint.

(6) Page 160.

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,
The pupil and the master, shared; (ll. 173, 174.)

So ed. 1824, which is supported by the Bodl. MS.,—both the cancelled draft and the revised version: cf. note (3) above. *P. W.*, 1839, has *now* for *they*—a reading retained by Rossetti alone of modern editors.

(7) Page 161.

Line 193. The 'three-dots' point at *storm* is in the Bodl. MS.

(8) Page 161.

Lines 202–207. The Bodl. MS., which has a comma and dash after *nightingale*, bears out James Thomson's ('B. V.'s') view, approved by Rossetti, that these lines form one sentence. The MS. has a dash after *here* (l. 207), which must be regarded as 'equivalent to a full stop or note of exclamation' (Locock). Edd. 1824, 1839 have a note of exclamation after *nightingale* (l. 204) and a comma after *here* (l. 207).

(9) Page 162.

Fragment iii (ll. 230–239). First printed from the Bodl. MS. by Mr. C. D. Locock. In the space here left blank, l. 231, the MS. has *manhood*, which is cancelled for some monosyllable unknown —query, *spring?*

(10) Page 162.

And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:— (l. 250.)

For *under* ed. 1839 has *beneath*, which, however, is cancelled for *under* in the Bodl. MS. (Locock).

(11) Page 162.

Lines 251–254. This, with many other places from l. 222 onwards, evidently lacks Shelley's final corrections.

(12) Page 163.

Line 259. According to Mr. Locock, the final text of this line in the Bodl. MS. runs:—

Exulting, while the wide world shrinks below, etc.

(13) Page 163.

Fragment v (ll. 261–278). The text here is much tortured in the Bodl. MS. What the editions give us is clearly but a rough and tentative draft. 'The language contains no third rhyme to *mountains* (l. 262) and *fountains* (l. 264).' Locock. Lines 270–278 were first printed by Mr. Locock.

(14) Page 163.

Line 289. For *light* (Bodl. MS.) here the edd. read *bright*. But *light* is undoubtedly the right word: cf. l. 287. *Investeth* (l. 285), Rossetti's cj. for *Invested* (1824, 1839) is found in the Bodl. MS.

(15) Page 164.

Lines 297–302 (*the darts . . . ungarmented*). First printed by Mr. Locock from the Bodl. MS.

(16) Page 164.

Another Fragment (*A*). Lines 1–3 of this *Fragment* reappear in a modified shape in the Bodl. MS. of *Prometheus Unbound*, II. iv. 28–30:—

Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm
And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within
Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony;

Here the lines are cancelled—only, however, to reappear in a heightened shape in *The Cenci*, I. i. 111–113:—

The dry, fixed eyeball; the pale quivering lip,
Which tells me that the spirit weeps within
Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.

(Garnett, Locock.)

(17) Pages 156–164.

Punctual Variations.

The punctuation of *Prince Athanase* is that of *P. W.*, 1839, save in the places specified in the notes above, and in l. 60—where there is a full stop, instead of the comma demanded by the sense, at the close of the line.

ROSALIND AND HELEN

(1) Page 166.

A sound from there, etc. (l. 63.)

Rossetti's cj., *there* for *thee*, is adopted by all modern editors.

(2) Page 170.

And down my cheeks the quick tears fell, etc. (l. 366.)

The word *fell* is Rossetti's cj. (to rhyme with *tell*, l. 369) for *ran* (1819, 1839).

(3) Page 171.

Lines 405–409. The syntax here does not hang together, and Shelley may have been thinking of this passage amongst others when, on Sept. 6, 1819, he wrote to Ollier:—'In the *Rosalind and Helen* I see there are some few errors, which are so much the worse because they are errors in the sense.' The obscurity, however, may have been, in part at least, designed: Rosalind grows incoherent before breaking off abruptly. No satisfactory emendation has been proposed.

(4) PAGE 173.

Where weary meteor lamps repose, etc. (l. 551.)

With Woodberry I regard *Where*, his cj. for *When* (1819, 1839), as necessary for the sense.

(5) PAGE 175.

With which they drag from mines of gore, etc. (l. 711.)

Rossetti proposes *yore* for *gore* here, or, as an alternative, *rivers of gore*, etc. If *yore* be right, Shelley's meaning is: 'With which *from of old* they drag,' etc. But cf. Note (3) above.

(6) PAGE 178.

Where, like twin vultures, etc. (l. 932.)

Where is Woodberry's reading for *When* (1819, 1839). Forman suggests *Where* but does not print it.

(7) PAGES 180, 181.

Lines 1093–1096. The *editio princeps* (1819) punctuates:—

Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,
That ivory dome, whose azure night
With golden stars, like heaven, was bright
O'er the split cedar's pointed flame;

(8) PAGES 181, 182.

Lines 1168–1170. *Sunk* (l. 1170) must be taken as a transitive in this passage, the grammar of which is defended by Mr. Swinburne.

(9) PAGE 182.

Whilst animal life many long years
Had rescue from a chasm of tears; (ll. 1208–9.)

Forman substitutes *rescue* for *rescued* (1819, 1839)—a highly probable cj. adopted by Dowden, but rejected by Woodberry. The sense is: 'Whilst my life, surviving by the physical functions merely, thus escaped during many years from hopeless weeping.'

(10) PAGES 165–184.

PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS.

The following is a list of punctual variations, giving in each case the pointing of the *editio princeps* (1819):—heart 257; weak 425; Aye 492; immortally 864; not, 894; bleeding, 933; Fidelity 1055; dome, 1093; bright 1095; tremble, 1150; life-dissolving 1166; words, 1176; *omit parentheses* ll. 1188–9; bereft, 1230.

JULIAN AND MADDALO

(1) PAGE 189.

Line 158. *Salutations past;* (1824); *Salutations passed;* (1839). Our text follows Woodberry.

(2) PAGE 189.

—we might be all
We dream of happy, high, majestical. (ll. 172–3.)

So the Hunt MS., ed. 1824, has a comma after *of* (l. 173), which is retained by Rossetti and Dowden.

(3) PAGE 191.

—his melody
Is interrupted—now we hear the din, etc. (ll. 265–6.)

So the Hunt MS.; *his melody Is interrupted now: we hear the din*, etc., 1824, 1829.

(4) PAGE 192.

Lines 282–284. The *ed. prin.* (1824) runs:—

Smiled in their motions as they lay apart,
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart
The eloquence of passion: soon he raised, etc.

(5) PAGE 194.

Line 414. The *ed. prin.* (1824) has a colon at the end of this line, and a semicolon at the close of l. 415.

(6) PAGES 192–199.

The 'three-dots' point, which appears several times in these pages, is taken from the Hunt MS. and serves to mark a pause longer than that of a full stop.

(7) PAGE 197.

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile, etc. (l. 511.)

The form *leant* is retained here, as the stem-vowel, though unaltered in spelling, is shortened in pronunciation. Thus *leant* (pronounced '*lent*') from *lean* comes under the same category as *crept* from *creep*, *lept* from *leap*, *cleft* from *cleave*, etc.—perfectly normal forms, all of them. In the case of weak preterites formed without any vowel-change, the more regular formation with *ed* is that which has been adopted in this volume. See Editor's *Preface.*

(8) PAGE 199.

Cancelled Fragments of Julian and Maddalo. These were first printed by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.

(9) PAGES 186–199.

PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS.

Shelley's final transcript of *Julian and Maddalo*, though written with great care and neatness, is yet very imperfectly punctuated. He would seem to have relied on the vigilance of Leigh Hunt—or, failing Hunt, of Peacock—to make good all omissions while seeing the poem through the press. Even Mr. Buxton Forman, careful as he is to uphold MS. authority in general, finds it necessary to supplement the pointing of the Hunt MS. in no fewer than ninety-four places. The following table gives a list of the pointings adopted in our text, over and above those found in the Hunt MS. In all but four or five instances, the supplementary points are derived from Mrs. Shelley's text of 1824.

1. *Comma added at end of line:* 40, 54, 60, 77, 78, 85, 90, 94, 107, 110, 116, 120, 123, 134, 144, 145, 154, 157, 168, 179, 183, 191, 196, 202, 203, 215, 217, 221, 224, 225, 238, 253, 254, 262, 287, 305, 307, 331, 338, 360, 375, 384, 385, 396, 432, 436, 447, 450, 451, 473, 475, 476, 511, 520, 526, 541, 582, 590, 591, 592, 593, 595, 603, 612.

2. *Comma added elsewhere:* seas, 58; vineyards, 58; dismounted, 61; evening, 65; companion, 86; isles, 90; meant, 94; Look, Julian, 96; maniacs, 110; maker, 113; past, 114; churches, 136; rainy, 141; blithe, 167; beauty, 174; Maddalo, 192; others, 205; this, 232; respects, 241; shriek, 267; wrote, 286; month, 300; cried, 300; O, 304; and, 306; misery, disappointment, 314; soon, 369; stay, 392; mad, 394; Nay, 398; serpent, 399; said, 403; cruel, 439; hate, 461; hearts, 483; he, 529; seemed, 529; Unseen, 554; morning, 582; aspect, 585; And, 593; remember, 604; parted, 610.

3. *Semicolon added at end of line:* 101, 103, 167, 181, 279, 496. 4. *Colon added at end of line:* 164, 178, 606, 610. 5. *Full stop added at end of line:* 95, 201, 299, 319, 407, 481, 599, 601, 617. 6. *Full stop added elsewhere:* transparent. 85; trials. 472; Venice. 583. 7. *Admiration-note added at end of line:* 392, 492; *elsewhere:* 310, 323. 8. *Dash added at end of line:* 158, 379. 9. *Full stop for comma (MS.)*: eye. 119. 10. *Full stop for dash (MS.)*: entered. 158.

11. *Colon for full stop (MS.)*: tale: 596. 12. *Dash for colon (MS.)*: this— 207; prepared— 379. 13. *Comma and dash for semicolon (MS.)*: expressionless, — 292. 14. *Comma and dash for comma (MS.)*: not,— 127.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

The variants of B. (Shelley's 'intermediate draft' of *Prometheus Unbound*, now in the Bodleian Library), here recorded, are taken from Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, etc., Clarendon Press, 1903. See Editor's Prefatory Note, p. 200, above.

(1) PAGE 208.

Act I, line 204. B. has—*shaken* in pencil above—*peopled*.

(2) PAGE 217.

Hark that outcry, etc. (I. 553.)

All edd. read *Mark that outcry*, etc. As Shelley nowhere else uses *Mark* in the sense of *List*, I have adopted *Hark*, the reading of B.

(3) PAGE 221.

Gleamed in the night. I wandered, etc. (I. 770.)

Forman proposes to delete the period at *night*.

(4) PAGE 222.

But treads with lulling footstep, etc. (I. 774.)

Forman prints *killing*—a misreading of B. Edd. 1820, 1839 read *silent*.

(5) PAGE 223.

. . . *the eastern star looks white*, etc. (I. 825.)

B. reads *wan* for *white*.

(6) PAGE 225.

Like footsteps of weak melody, etc. (II. i. 89.)

B. reads *far* (above a cancelled *lost*) for *weak*.

(7) PAGE 229.

And wakes the destined soft emotion,—
Attracts, impels them;
(II. ii. 50, 51.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *destined soft emotion, Attracts*, etc.; *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. reads *destined: soft emotion Attracts*, etc.; *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. reads *destined, soft emotion Attracts*, etc. Forman and Dowden place a period, and Woodberry a semicolon, at *destined* (l. 50).

(8) PAGE 229.

There steams a plume-uplifting wind, etc. (II. ii. 53.)

Here *steams* is found in B., in the *ed. prin.* (1820) and in the 1st ed. of *P. W.*, 1839. In the 2nd ed., 1839, *streams* appears—no doubt a misprint overlooked by the editress.

(9) PAGE 229.

Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet, etc. (II. ii. 60.)

So *P. W.*, 1839, both edd. The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *hurrying as*, etc.

(10) PAGE 231.

See'st thou shapes within the mist? (II. iii. 50.)

So B., where these words are substituted for the cancelled *I see thin shapes within the mist* of the *ed. prin.* (1820). 'The credit of discovering the true reading belongs to Zupitza' (Locock).

(11) PAGE 232.

II. iv. 12–18. The construction is faulty here, but the sense, as Professor Woodberry observes, is clear.

(12) PAGE 234.

. . . *but who rains down*, etc. (II. iv. 100.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) has *reigns*—a reading which Forman bravely but unsuccessfully attempts to defend.

(13) Page 237.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning, etc. (II. v. 54.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) has *lips* for *limbs*, but the word *membre* in Shelley's Italian prose version of these lines establishes *limbs*, the reading of B. (Locock).

(14) Page 238.

Which in the winds and on the waves doth move, (II. v. 96.)

The word *and* is Rossetti's conjectural emendation, adopted by Forman and Dowden. Woodberry unhappily observes that 'the emendation corrects a faultless line merely to make it agree with stanzaic structure, and . . . is open to the gravest doubt.' Rossetti's conjecture is fully established by the authority of B.

(15) Page 249.

III. iv. 172–174. The *ed. prin.* (1820) punctuates:

mouldering round
These imaged to the pride of kings and priests,
A dark yet mighty faith, a power, etc.

This punctuation is retained by Forman and Dowden; that of our text is Woodberry's.

(16) Page 249.

III. iv. 180, 188. A dash has been introduced at the close of these two lines to indicate the construction more clearly. And for the sake of clearness a note of interrogation has been substituted for the semicolon of 1820 after *Passionless* (line 198).

(17) Page 253.

Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses; (IV. 107.)

B. has *sliding* for *loose* (cancelled).

(18) Page 255.

By ebbing light into her western cave, (IV. 208.)

Here *light* is the reading of B. for *night* (all edd.). Mr. Locock tells us that the anticipated discovery of this reading was the origin of his examination of the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. In printing *night* Marchant's compositor blundered; yet 'we cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.'

(19) Page 256.

Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden, (IV. 242.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *white, green and golden*, etc.—*white and green* being Rossetti's emendation, adopted by Forman and Dowden. Here again—cf. note (17) above—Prof. Woodberry commits himself by stigmatizing the correction as one 'for which there is no authority in Shelley's habitual versification.' Rossetti's conjecture is confirmed by the reading of B., *white and green*, etc.

(20) Page 256.

Filling the abyss with sun-like lightenings, (IV. 276.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *lightnings*, for which Rossetti substitutes *lightenings*—a conjecture described by Forman as 'an example of how a very slight change may produce a very calamitous result.' B. however supports Rossetti, and in point of fact Shelley usually wrote *lightenings*, even where the word counts as a dissyllable (Locock).

(21) Page 263.

Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:— (IV. 547.)

For *throng* (cancelled) B. reads *feed*, i. e., 'feed on' (cf. *Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire*, III.

iv. 110)—a reading which carries on the metaphor of line 546 (*ye untameable herds*), and ought, perhaps, to be adopted into the text.

(22) Pages 204–264.

Punctual Variations.

The punctuation of our text is that of the *editio princeps* (1820), except in the places indicated in the following list, which records in each instance the pointing of 1820:—

Act I.—empire. 15; O, 17; God 144; words 185; internally. 299; O, 302; gnash 345; wail 345; Sufferer 352; agony. 491; Between 712; cloud 712; vale 826.

Act II, *Scene* i.—air 129; by 153; fire, 155. *Scene* ii.—noonday, 25; hurrying 60. *Scene* iii.—mist. 50. *Scene* iv.—sun, 4; Ungazed 5; on 103; ay 106; secrets. 115. *Scene* v.—brightness 67.

Act III, *Scene* iii.—apparitions, 49; beauty, 51; phantoms, (*omit parentheses*) 52; reality, 53; wind 98. *Scene* iv.—toil 109; fire. 110; feel; 114; borne; 115; said 124; priests, 173; man, 180; hate, 188; Passionless; 198.

Act IV.—dreams, 66; air, 187; dreams, 209; woods 211; thunder-storm, 215; lie 298; bones 342; blending. 343; mire. 349; pass, 371; kind 385; move. 387.

THE CENCI

(1) Page 276.

The deed he saw could not have rated higher
Than his most worthless life:—
(I. i. 24, 25.)

Than is Mrs. Shelley's emendation (1839) for *That*, the word in the *editio princeps* (1819) printed in Italy, and in the (standard) edition of 1821. The sense is: 'The crime he witnessed could not have proved costlier to redeem than his murder has proved to me.'

(2) Page 278.

And but that there yet remains a deed to act, etc. (I. i. 100.)

Read: *And bút | that there yét | remáins* | etc.

(3) Page 278.

I. i. 111–113. The earliest draft of these lines appears as a tentative fragment in the Bodleian MS. of *Prince Athanase* (*vid. supr.*, p. 164). In the Bodleian MS. of *Prometheus Unbound* they reappear (after II. iv. 27) in a modified shape, as follows:—

Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm
And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within
Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony;

Here again, however, the passage is cancelled, once more to reappear in its final and most effective shape in *The Cenci* (Locock).

(4) Page 280.

And thus I love you still, but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;
(I. ii. 24, 25.)

For this, the reading of the standard edition (1821), the *ed. prin.* has, *And yet I love*, etc., which Rossetti retains. If *yet* be right, the line should be punctuated:—

And yet I love you still,—but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;

(5) Pages 283, 284.

What, if we,
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,
His children and his wife, etc.
(I. iii. 103–105.)

For *were* (104) Rossetti cj. *are* or *wear*. *Wear* is a plausible emendation, but the text as it stands is defensible.

(6) Page 302.

But that no power can fill with
vital oil
That broken lamp of flesh.
(III. ii. 17, 18.)

The standard text (1821) has a Shelleyan comma after oil (17), which Forman retains. Woodberry adds a dash to the comma, thus making *that* (17) a demonstrative pronoun indicating *broken lamp of flesh*. The pointing of our text is that of edd. 1819, 1839. *But that* (17) is to be taken as a prepositional conjunction linking the dependent clause, *no power . . . lamp of flesh*, to the principal sentence, *So wastes . . . kindled mine* (15, 16).

(7) Pages 276–330.

The following list of punctual variations indicates the places where our pointing departs from that of the standard text of 1821, and records in each instance the pointing of that edition :—

Act I, *Scene* ii.—Ah ! No, 34 ; *Scene* iii.—hope, 29 ; Why 44 ; love 115 ; thou 146 ; Ay 146.

Act II, *Scene* i.—Ah ! No, 13 ; Ah ! No, 73 ; courage 80 ; nook 179 ; *Scene* ii.—fire, 70 ; courage 152.

Act III, *Scene* i.—Why 64 ; mock 185 ; opinion 185 ; law 185 ; strange 188 ; friend 222 ; *Scene* ii.—so 3 ; oil, 17.

Act IV, *Scene* i.—wrong 41 ; looked 97 ; child 107 ; *Scene* iii.—What 19 ; father, (*omit quotes*) 32.

Act V, *Scene* ii.—years 119 ; *Scene* iii.—Ay, 5 ; Guards 94 ; *Scene* iv.—child, 145.

THE MASK OF ANARCHY

Our text follows in the main the transcript by Mrs. Shelley (with additions and corrections in Shelley's hand) known as the 'Hunt MS.' For the readings of this MS. we are indebted to Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876. The variants of the 'Wise MS.' (see Prefatory Note, p. 335) are derived from the Facsimile edited in 1887 for the Shelley Society by Mr. Buxton Forman.

(1) Page 335.

Like Eldon, an ermined gown ;
(iv. 2.)

The *editio princeps* (1832) has *Like Lord E——* here. *Lord* is inserted in minute characters in the Wise MS., but is rejected from our text as having been cancelled by the poet himself in the (later) Hunt MS.

(2) Page 336.

For he knew the Palaces
Of our Kings were rightly his ;
(xx. 1, 2.)

For *rightly* (Wise MS.) the Hunt MS. and edd. 1832, 1839 have *nightly* which is retained by Rossetti and in Forman's text of 1876. Dowden and Woodberry print *rightly* which also appears in Forman's latest text (*Aldine Shelley*, 1892).

(3) Page 338.

In a neat and happy home.
(liv. 4.)

For *In* (Wise MS., edd. 1832, 1839) the Hunt MS. reads *To a neat*, etc., which is adopted by Rossetti and Dowden, and appeared in Forman's text of 1876. Woodberry and Forman (1892) print *In a neat*, etc.

(4) Page 340.

Stanzas lxx. 3, 4; lxxi. 1. These form one continuous clause in every text save the *editio princeps*, 1832, where a semicolon appears after *around* (lxx. 4).

(5) Pages 335–341.

Our punctuation follows that of the Hunt MS., save in the following places, where a comma, wanting in the MS., is supplied in the text:—gay 47; came 58; waken 122; shaken 123; call 124; number 152; dwell 163; thou 209; thee 249; fashion 287; surprise 345; free 358. A semicolon is supplied after *earth* (line 131).

PETER BELL THE THIRD

Thomas Brown, Esq., the Younger, H. F., to whom the *Dedication* is addressed, is the Irish poet, Tom Moore. The letters *H. F.* may stand for 'Historian of the Fudges' (Garnett), *Hibernicae Filius* (Rossetti), or, perhaps, *Hibernicae Fidicen*. Castles and Oliver (III. ii. 1; VII. iv. 4) were government spies, as readers of Charles Lamb are aware. The allusion in VI. xxxvi. is to Wordsworth's *Thanksgiving Ode on The Battle of Waterloo*, original version, published in 1816:—

But Thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter,
—Yea, Carnage is Thy daughter!

(1) Page 353.

Lines 547–549 (VI. xviii. 5; xix. 1, 2). These lines evidently form a continuous clause. The full stop of the *ed. prin.* at *rocks*, l. 547, has therefore been deleted, and a semicolon substituted for the original comma at the close of l. 546.

(2) Page 354.

'*Ay—and at last desert me too.*' (l. 603.)

Oddly enough, no one seems to have noticed that these words are spoken—not by Peter to his soul, but—by his soul to Peter, by way of rejoinder to the challenge of lines 600–602:—'*And I and you, My dearest Soul, will then make merry, As the Prince Regent did with Sherry.*' In order to indicate this fact, inverted commas are inserted at the close of line 602 and the beginning of l. 603.

(3) Pages 343–357.

The punctuation of the *editio princeps*, 1839, has been throughout revised, but—with the two exceptions specified in notes (1) and (2) above—it seemed an unprofitable labour to record the particular alterations, which serve but to clarify—in no instance to modify—the sense as indicated by Mrs. Shelley's punctuation.

LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE

Our text mainly follows Mrs. Shelley's transcript, for the readings of which we are indebted to Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876. The variants from Shelley's draft are supplied by Dr. Garnett.

(1) Page 362.

Lines 197–201. These lines, which are wanting in edd. 1824 and 1839 (1st ed.), are supplied from Mrs. Shelley's transcript and from Shelley's draft (Bos. MS.). In the 2nd edition of 1839 the following lines appear in their place:—

Your old friend Godwin, greater none than he;
Though fallen on evil times, yet will he stand,

Among the spirits of our age and land,
Before the dread tribunal of To-come
The foremost, whilst rebuke stands pale and dumb.

(2) Page 365.

Line 296. The names in this line are supplied from the two MSS. In the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824 the line appears:—*Oh! that H—— —— and —— were there*, etc.

(3) Pages 358-365.

The following list gives the places where the pointing of the text varies from that of Mrs. Shelley's transcript as reported by Mr. Buxton Forman, and records in each case the pointing of that original:—Turk 26; scorn 40; understood, 49; boat— 75; think, 86; believe; 158; are; 164; fair 233; cameleopard; 240; Now 291.

THE WITCH OF ATLAS

(1) Pages 366–382.

The following list gives the places where our text departs from the pointing of the *editio princeps* (*Dedication*, 1839; *Witch of Atlas*, 1824), and records in each case the original pointing:—Dedic.—pinions, 14; fellow, 41; Othello, 45. Witch of Atlas.—bliss; 164; above. 192; gums 258; flashed 409; sunlight, 409; Thamondocana. 424; by. 432; engraven. 448; apart, 662; mind! 662.

EPIPSYCHIDION

(1) Pages 406–419.

The following list gives the places where our text departs from the pointing of the *editio princeps*, 1821, with the original point in each case:—love, 44; pleasure; 68; flowing 96; where! 234; passed 252; dreamed, 278; Night 418; year), 440; children, 528.

ADONAIS

(1) Pages 427–439.

The following list indicates the places in which the punctuation of this edition departs from that of the *ed. prin.* of 1821, and records in each instance the pointing of that text:—thou 10; Oh 19; apace, 65; Oh 73; flown 138; Thou 142; Ah 154; immersed 167; corpse 172; tender 172; his 193; they 213; Death 217; Might 218; bow, 249; sighs 314; escape 320; Cease 366; dark 406; forth 415; dead, 440; Whilst 493.

HELLAS

A Reprint of the original edition (1822) of *Hellas* was edited for the Shelley Society in 1887 by Mr. Thomas J. Wise. In Shelley's list of *Dramatis Personae* the Phantom of Mahomet the Second is wanting. Shelley's list of *Errata* in ed. 1822 was first printed in Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876 (iv. p. 572). These *errata* are silently corrected in the text.

(1) Page 464.

For Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind, etc.
(ll. 728–729.)

'"For" has no rhyme (unless "are" and "despair" are to be considered such): it requires to rhyme with "hear." From this defect of rhyme, and other considerations, I (following Mr. Fleay) used to consider it almost certain that "Fear" ought to replace "For"; and I gave "Fear" in my edition of 1870. . . . However, the word in the MS. ["Williams transcript"] is "For," and Shelley's list of errata leaves this unaltered — so we must needs abide by it.'—Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, ed. 1878 (3 vols.), ii. p. 456.

(2) Page 464.

Lines 729–732. This quatrain, as Dr. Garnett (*Letters of Shelley*, 1884, pp. 166, 249) points out, is an expansion of the following lines from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (758–760), quoted by Shelley in a letter to his wife, dated 'Friday, August 10, 1821':—

> *τὸ δυσσεβὲς—*
> *μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει,*
> *σφετέρᾳ δ' εἰκότα γέννᾳ.*

(3) Pages 472, 473.

Lines 1091–1093. This passage, from the words *more bright* to the close of l. 1093, is wanting in the *editio princeps*, 1822, its place being supplied by asterisks. The lacuna in the text is due, no doubt, to the timidity of Ollier, the publisher, whom Shelley had authorised to make excisions from the notes. In *P. W.*, 1839, the lines, as they appear in our text, are restored; in Galignani's edition of *Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats* (Paris, 1829), however, they had already appeared, though with the substitution of *wise* for *bright* (l. 1091), and of *unwithstood* for *unsubdued* (l. 1093). Galignani's reading—*native* for *votive*—in l. 1095 is an evident misprint. In Ascham's edition of Shelley (2 vols., fcp. 8vo., 1834), the passage is reprinted from Galignani.

(4) Pages 444–473.

The following list shows the places in which our text departs from the punctuation of the *editio princeps*, 1822, and records in each instance the pointing of that edition:—dreams 71; course. 125; mockery 150; conqueror 212; streams 235; Moslems 275; West 305; moon, 347; harm, 394; shame, 402; anger 408; descends 447; crime 454; banner. 461; Phanae, 470; blood 551; tyrant 557; Cydaris, 606; Heaven 636; Highness 638; man 738; sayest 738; One 768; mountains 831; dust 885; consummation? 902; dream 921; may 923; death 935; clime. 1005; feast, 1025; horn, 1032; Noon, 1045; death 1057; dowers 1094.

CHARLES THE FIRST

To Mr. Rossetti we owe the reconstruction of this fragmentary drama out of materials partly published by Mrs. Shelley in 1824, partly recovered from MS. by himself. The bracketed words are, presumably, supplied by Mr. Rossetti to fill actual *lacunae* in the MS.; those queried represent indistinct writing. Mr. Rossetti's additions to the text are indicated in the footnotes. In one or two instances Mr. Forman and Dr. Garnett have restored the true reading. The list of *Dramatis Personae* is Mr. Forman's.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

(1) Page 506.

Lines 131–135. This grammatically incoherent passage is thus conjecturally emended by Rossetti:—

> *Fled back like eagles to their native noon;*
> For *those who put aside the diadem*
> *Of earthly thrones or gems . . .*,
> Whether *of Athens or Jerusalem*,
> *Were neither mid the mighty captives seen*, etc.

In the case of an incomplete poem lacking the author's final corrections, however, restoration by conjecture is, to say the least of it, gratuitous.

(2) PAGE 510.

Line 282. The words, '*Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.' And then*—are wanting in edd. 1824, 1839, and were recovered by Dr. Garnett from the Boscombe MS. Mrs. Shelley's note here runs:—'There is a chasm here in the MS. which it is impossible to fill. It appears from the context that other shapes pass and that Rousseau still stood beside the dreamer.' Mr. Forman thinks that the 'chasm' is filled up by the words restored from the MS. by Dr. Garnett. 'If there is really still a chasm,' he writes (1876), 'it is very remarkable that line 282 on one side of it should rhyme with lines 276, 278 and 280 on the other.'

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

(1) PAGE 519.

To ——. Mrs. Shelley tentatively assigned this sonnet to 1817. 'It seems not improbable that it was addressed at this time [June, 1814] to Mary Godwin.' Dowden, *Life*, i. 422. Woodberry suggests that 'Harriet answers as well, or better, to the situation described.'

(2) PAGE 520.

On Death. These stanzas occur in the Esdaile MS. along with others which Shelley intended to print with *Queen Mab* in 1813; but the text was revised before publication in 1816.

(3) PAGE 521.

To ——. 'The poem beginning "Oh, there are spirits in the air," was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew' — writes Mrs. Shelley. Mr. Bertram Dobell, Mr. Rossetti and Professor Dowden, however, incline to think that we have here an address by Shelley in a despondent mood to his own spirit.

(4) PAGE 523.

Lines. These appear to be antedated by a year, as they evidently allude to the death of Harriet Shelley in November, 1816.

(5) PAGE 537.

Another Fragment to Music. To Mr. Forman we owe the restoration of the true text here—'food of Love.' Mrs. Shelley printed 'god of Love.'

(6) PAGE 562.

Marenghi, ll. 92, 93. The 1870 (Rossetti) version of these lines is:—

White bones, and locks of dun
and yellow hair,
And ringèd horns which buffaloes
did wear—

The words *locks of dun* (l. 92) are cancelled in the MS. Shelley's failure to cancel the whole line was due, Mr. Locock rightly argues, to inadvertence merely; instead of *buffaloes* the MS. gives *the buffalo*, and it supplies the 'wonderful line' (Locock) which closes the stanza in our text, and with which Mr. Locock aptly compares *Mont Blanc*, l. 69:—

Save when the eagle brings some
hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there.

(7) PAGE 598.

Ode to Liberty, ll. 1, 2. On the suggestion of his brother, Mr. Alfred Forman, the editor of the Library Edition of Shelley's Poems (1876), Mr. Buxton Forman, printed these lines as follows:—

A glorious people vibrated again:
The lightning of the nations,
Liberty,
From heart to heart, etc.

The testimony of Shelley's autograph in the Harvard College MS., however, is final against such a punctuation.

(8) Page 599.

Lines 41, 42. We follow Mrs. Shelley's punctuation (1839). In Shelley's edition (1820) there is no stop at the end of l. 41, and a semicolon closes l. 42.

(9) Page 610.

Ode to Naples. In Mrs. Shelley's editions the various sections of this Ode are severally headed as follows:—'*Epode* I *α*, *Epode* II *α*, *Strophe α* 1, *Strophe β* 2, *Antistrophe α*, *Antistrophe β* 2, *Antistrophe αγ*, *Antistrophe βγ*, *Epode* I *β*, *Epode* II *β*. In the MS., Mr. Locock tells us, the headings are 'very doubtful, many of them being vaguely altered with pen and pencil.' Shelley evidently hesitated between two or three alternative ways of indicating the structure and corresponding parts of his elaborate song; hence the chaotic jumble of headings printed in edd. 1824, 1839. So far as the *Epodes* are concerned, the headings in this edition are those of edd. 1824, 1839, which may be taken as supported by the MS. (Locock). As to the remaining sections, Mr. Locock's examination of the MS. leads him to conclude that Shelley's final choice was:—'*Strophe* 1, *Strophe* 2, *Antistrophe* 1, *Antistrophe* 2, *Antistrophe* 1*α*, *Antistrophe* 2*α*.' This in itself would be perfectly appropriate, but it would be inconsistent with the method employed in designating the *Epodes*. I have therefore adopted in preference a scheme which, if it lacks MS. authority in some particulars, has at least the merit of being absolutely logical and consistent throughout.

Mr. Locock has some interesting remarks on the metrical features of this complex ode. On the 10th line of *Antistrophe* I *α* (l. 86 of the ode)—*Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk*—which exceeds by one foot the 10th lines of the two corresponding divisions, *Strophe* I and *Antistrophe* I *β*, he observes happily enough that '*Aghast* may well have been intended to disappear.' Mr. Locock does not seem to notice that the closing lines of these three answering sections—(1) *Hail, hail, all hail!*—(2) *Thou shalt be great—All hail!*—(3) *Art Thou of all these hopes.—O hail!* increase by regular lengths—two, three, four iambi. Nor does he seem quite to grasp Shelley's intention with regard to the rhyme scheme of the other triple group, *Strophe* II, *Antistrophe* II *α*, *Antistrophe* II *β*. That of *Strophe* II may be thus expressed:—*a–a–bc*; *d–d–bc*; *a–c–d*; *b–c*. Between this and *Antistrophe* II *α* (the second member of the group) there is a general correspondence with, in one particular, a subtle modification. The scheme now becomes: *a–a–bc; d–d–bc; a–c–b; d–c:* i.e. the rhymes of lines 9 and 10 are transposed—*God* (l. 9) answering to the halfway rhymes of ll. 3 and 6, *gawd* and *unawed*, instead of (as in *Strophe* II) to the rhyme-endings of ll. 4 and 5; and, *vice versa*, *fate* (l. 10) answering to *desolate* and *state* (ll. 4 and 5), instead of to the halfway rhymes aforesaid. As to *Antistrophe* II *β*, that follows *Antistrophe* II *α*, so far as it goes; but after l. 9 it breaks off suddenly, and closes with two lines corresponding in length and rhyme to the closing couplet of *Antistrophe* I *β*, the section immediately preceding, which, however, belongs not to this group, but to the other. Mr. Locock speaks of l. 124 as 'a rhymeless line.' Rhymeless it is not, for *shore*, its rhyme-termination, answers to *bower* and *power*, the halfway rhymes of ll. 118 and 121 respectively. Why Mr. Locock should call line 12 an 'unmetrical line,' I cannot see. It is a decasyllabic line, with a trochee substituted for an iambus in the third foot—*Aroúnd* | *me gleámed* | *mány a* | *bright sé* | *pulchre.*

(10) Page 617.

The Tower of Famine.—It is doubtful whether the following note is Shelley's or Mrs. Shelley's: 'At Pisa there still exists the prison of Ugolino, which goes by the name of "La Torre della Fame"; in the adjoining building the galley-slaves are confined. It is situated on the Ponte al Marc on the Arno.'

(11) Page 645.

Ginevra, l. 129: *Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses.* The footnote omits Professor Dowden's conjectural emendation—*woods*—for *winds*, the reading of ed. 1824 here.

(12) Page 653.

The Lady of the South. Our text adopts Mr. Forman's correction—*drouth* for *drought*—in l. 3. This should have been recorded in a footnote.

(13) Page 688.

Hymn to Mercury, l. 609. The period at *now* is supported by the Harvard MS.

JUVENILIA.

QUEEN MAB

(1) Page 768.

Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element: the block
That for uncounted ages has remained
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active, living spirit.
(IV, ll. 139–143.)

This punctuation was proposed in 1888 by Mr. J. R. Tutin (see *Notebook of the Shelley Society*, Part I, p. 21), and adopted by Dowden, *Poetical Works of Shelley*, Macmillan, 1890. The *editio princeps* (1813), which is followed by Forman (1892) and Woodberry (1893), has a comma after *element* and a full stop at *remained.*

(2) Page 768.

Guards . . . from a nation's rage
Secure the crown, etc.
(IV, ll. 173–176.)

So Mrs. Shelley (*P. W.*, 1839, both edd.), Rossetti, Forman, Dowden. The *ed. prin.* reads *Secures*, which Woodberry defends and retains.

(3) Page 769.

IV, ll. 203–220: omitted by Mrs. Shelley from the text of *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed., but restored in the 2nd ed. of 1839. See p. 825 above, *Note on* QUEEN MAB, *by Mrs. Shelley.*

(4) Page 770.

All germs of promise, yet when the tall trees, etc. (V, l. 9.)

So Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry. In edd. 1813 (*ed. prin.*) and 1839 (*P. W.*, both edd.) there is a full stop at *promise* which Forman retains.

(5) Page 772

Who ever hears his famished offspring's scream, etc.
(V, l. 116.)

The *ed. prin.* has *offsprings*—an evident misprint.

(6) Pages 775–783.

VI, l. 54–VII, l. 275: struck out of the text of *P. W.*, 1839 (1st ed.), but restored in the 2nd edition of that year. See Note (3) above.

(7) Page 778.

The exterminable spirit it contains, etc. (VII, l. 23.)

Exterminable seems to be used here in the sense of 'illimitable' (N. E. D.). Rossetti proposes *interminable*, or *inexterminable*.

(8) Page 781.

A smile of godlike malice reillumed, etc. (VII, l. 180.)

The *ed. prin.* and the first edition of *P. W.*, 1839, read *reillumined* here, which is retained by Forman, Dowden, Woodberry. With Rossetti, I follow Mrs. Shelley's reading in *P. W.*, 1839 (2nd ed.).

(9) Page 785.

One curse alone was spared—the name of God. (VIII, l. 165.)

Removed from the text, *P. W.*, 1839 (1st ed.); restored, *P. W.*, 1839 (2nd ed.). See Notes (3) and (6) above.

(10) Page 786.

Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Dawns on the virtuous mind, etc. (VIII, ll. 204–205.)

With some hesitation as to *lore*, I reprint these lines as they are given by Shelley himself in the note on this passage (*supra*, p. 982). The text of 1813 runs:—

Which from the exhaustless store of human weal
Draws on the virtuous mind, etc.

This is retained by Woodberry, while Rossetti, Forman, and Dowden adopt eclectic texts, Forman and Dowden reading *lore* and *Draws*, while Rossetti, again, reads *store* and *Dawns*. Our text is supported by the authority of Dr. Richard Garnett. The comma after *infiniteness* (l. 206) has a metrical, not a logical, value.

(11) Page 788.

Nor searing Reason with the brand of God. (IX, l. 48.)

Removed from the text, *P. W.*, 1839 (1st ed.), by Mrs. Shelley, who failed, doubtless through an oversight, to restore it in the second edition. See Notes (3), (6), and (9) above.

(12) Page 788.

Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care, etc. (IX, l. 67.)

The *ed. prin.* reads *pride, or care*, which is retained by Forman and Woodberry. With Rossetti and Dowden, I follow Mrs. Shelley's text, *P. W.*, 1839 (both edd.).

NOTES TO QUEEN MAB

(1) Page 810.

The mine, big with destructive power, burst under me, etc. (Note on VII. 67.)

This is the reading of the *Poetical Works* of 1839 (2nd ed.). The *editio princeps* (1813) reads *burst upon me*. Doubtless *under* was intended by Shelley: the occurrence, thrice over, of *upon* in the ten lines preceding would account for the unconscious substitution of the word here, either by the printer, or perhaps by Shelley himself in his transcript for the press.

(2) Page 815.

. . . *it cannot arise from reasoning*, etc. (Note on VII. 135.)

The *editio princeps* (1813) has *conviction* for *reasoning* here—an obvious error of the press, overlooked by Mrs. Shelley in 1839, and perpetuated in his several editions of the poems by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. *Reasoning*, Mr. W. M. Rossetti's conjectural emendation, is manifestly the right word here, and has been adopted by Dowden and Woodberry.

(3) PAGE 816.

Him, still from hope to hope, etc. (Note on VIII. 203–207.)

See editor's note (10) on *Queen Mab* above.

(1) PAGE 830.

A Dialogue.—The titles of this poem, of the stanzas *On an Icicle*, etc., and of the lines *To Death*, were first given by Professor Dowden (*P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1890) from the Esdaile MS. book. The textual corrections from the same quarter (see footnotes *passim*) are also owing to Professor Dowden.

(2) PAGE 833.

Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire.—Dr. Garnett, who in 1898 edited for Mr. John Lane a reprint of these long-lost verses, identifies *Victor's* coadjutrix, *Cazire*, with Elizabeth Shelley, the poet's sister. 'The two initial pieces are the only two which can be attributed to Elizabeth Shelley with absolute certainty, though others in the volume may possibly belong to her' (Garnett).

(3) PAGE 840.

Saint Edmond's Eve. This ballad-tale was "conveyed" in its entirety by *Cazire* from Matthew Gregory Lewis's *Tales of Terror*, 1801, where it appears under the title of *The Black Canon of Elmham; or, Saint Edmond's Eve.* Stockdale, the publisher of *Victor and Cazire*, detected the imposition, and communicated his discovery to Shelley—when 'with all the ardour natural to his character he [Shelley] expressed the warmest resentment at the imposition practised upon him by his coadjutor, and entreated me to destroy all the copies, of which about one hundred had been put into circulation.'

(4) PAGE 860.

To Mary who Died in this Opinion.—From a letter addressed by Shelley to Miss Hitchener, dated November 23, 1811.

(5) PAGE 860.

A Tale of Society.—The titles of this and the following piece were first given by Professor Dowden from the Esdaile MS., from which also one or two corrections in the text of both poems, made in Macmillan's edition of 1890, were derived.

A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL EDITIONS OF SHELLEY'S POETICAL WORKS,

SHOWING THE VARIOUS PRINTED SOURCES OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS EDITION

I.

(1) *Original Poetry;* | *By* | *Victor and Cazire.* | Call it not vain:—they do not err, | Who say, that, when the poet dies, | Mute Nature mourns her worshipper. | *Lay of the Last Minstrel.* | Worthing | Printed by C. and W. Phillips, | for the Authors; | And sold by J. J. Stockdale, 41, Pall-Mall, | And all other Booksellers. | 1810.

(2) *Original* | *Poetry* | *By* | *Victor & Cazire* | [Percy Bysshe Shelley | & Elizabeth Shelley] | *Edited by* | Richard Garnett | C.B., LL.D. | *Published by* | John Lane, *at the Sign* | *of the Bodley Head in* | London *and* New York | MDCCCXCVIII.

II.

Posthumous Fragments | *of* | *Margaret Nicholson;* | Being Poems Found Amongst the Papers of that | Noted Female who attempted the Life | of the King in 1786. | Edited by | John Fitz-Victor. | Oxford: | Printed and sold by J. Munday | 1810.

III.

St. Irvyne; | *or,* | *The Rosicrucian.* | A Romance. | By | A Gentleman | of the University of Oxford. | London: | Printed for J. J. Stockdale, | 41, Pall Mall. | 1811.

IV.

The Devil's Walk; a Ballad. Printed as a broadside, 1812.

V.

Queen Mab; | *a* | *Philosophical Poem:* | with Notes. | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | Ecrasez l'Infame! | *Correspondance de Voltaire.* | Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante | Trita solo; iuvat integros accedere fonteis; | Atque haurire: iuratque (*sic*) novos decerpere flores. | Unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae. | Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis | Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo. | *Lucret.* lib. iv. | Δος που στῶ, καὶ κοσμον κινησω. | *Archimedes.* | London: | Printed by P. B. Shelley, | 23, Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square. | 1813.

VI.

Alastor; | *or,* | *The Spirit of Solitude:* | and Other Poems. | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley | London | Printed for Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, Pater-|noster Row; and Carpenter and Son, | Old Bond Street: | By S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey | 1816.

VII.

(1) *Laon and Cythna;* | *or,* | *The Revolution* | *of* | *the Golden City:* | A Vision of the Nineteenth Century. | In the Stanza of Spenser. | By | Percy B. Shelley. | Δος που στω και κοσμον κινησω. | Archimedes. | London: | Printed for Sherwood, Neely, & Jones, Paternoster-|Row; and C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck-Street: | By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden. | 1818.

(2) *The* | *Revolt of Islam;* | A Poem, | in Twelve Cantos. | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | London: | Printed for C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck-Street; | By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden. | 1818.

(3) A few copies of *The Revolt of Islam* bear date 1817 instead of 1818.

(4) 'The same sheets were used again in 1829 with a third title-page similar to the foregoing [2], but with the imprint "London: | Printed for John Brooks, | 421 Oxford-Street. | 1829."' (H. Buxton Forman, C.B.: *The Shelley Library*, p. 73.)

(5) 'Copies of the 1829 issue of *The Revolt of Islam* not infrequently occur with *Laon and Cythna* text.' (*Ibid.*, p. 73.)

VIII.

Rosalind and Helen, | A Modern Eclogue; | With Other Poems: | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | London: | Printed for C. and J. Ollier, | Vere Street, Bond Street. | 1819.

IX.

(1) *The Cenci.* | A Tragedy, | In Five Acts. | *By* Percy B. Shelley. | Italy. | Printed for C. and J. Ollier, | Vere Street, Bond Street. | London. | 1819.

(2) *The Cenci* | A Tragedy | In Five Acts | *By* | Percy Bysshe Shelley | Second Edition | London | C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street | 1821.

X.

Prometheus Unbound | A Lyrical Drama | In Four Acts | With Other Poems | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley | Audisne haec, Amphiarae, sub terram abdite? | London | C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street | 1820.

XI.

Oedipus Tyrannus; | *or,* | *Swellfoot The Tyrant.* | A Tragedy. | *In Two Acts.* | Translated from the Original Doric. | ——Choose Reform or civil-war, | When thro' thy streets, instead of hare with dogs, | A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs, | Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR. | London: | Published for the Author, | By J. Johnston, 98, Cheapside, and sold by | all booksellers. | 1820.

XII.

Epipsychidion | Verses Addressed to the Noble | And Unfortunate Lady | Emilia V—— | Now Imprisoned in the Convent of —— | L' anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nel infinito | un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso | baratro. Her Own Words. | London | C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street | MDCCCXXI.

XIII.

(1) *Adonais* | An Elegy on the Death of John Keats, | Author of Endymion, Hyperion etc. | By | Percy B. Shelley | *Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ενι ζῶοισιν εῶος.* | *Νυν δε θανῶν, λαμπεις ἕσπερος εν φθίμενοις.* | Plato. | Pisa | With the Types of Didot | MDCCCXXI.

(2) *Adonais.* | An Elegy | on the | Death of John Keats, | Author of Endymion, Hyperion, etc. | By | Percy B. Shelley. | [Motto as in (1)] Cambridge: | Printed by W. Metcalfe, | and sold by Messrs. Gee & Bridges, Market-Hill. | MDCCCXXIX.

XIV.

Hellas | A Lyrical Drama | By | Percy B. Shelley | ΜΑΝΤΙΣ ΕΙΜ' ΕΣΘΛΩΝ 'ΑΓΩΝΩΝ | Oedip. Colon. | London | Charles and James Ollier Vere Street | Bond Street | MDCCCXXII. (The last work issued in Shelley's lifetime.)

XV.

Posthumous Poems | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley.* | In nobil sangue vita umile e queta, | Ed in alto intelletto un puro core; | Frutto senile in sul giovenil fiore, | E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta. | Petrarca. |

London, 1824: | Printed for John and Henry L. Hunt, | Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. (Edited by Mrs. Shelley.)

XVI.

The | *Masque of Anarchy.* | A Poem. | By Percy Bysshe Shelley. Now first published, with a Preface | by Leigh Hunt. | Hope is Strong; | Justice and Truth their winged child have found. | Revolt of Islam. | London: | Edward Moxon, 64, New Bond Street. | 1832.

XVII.

The Shelley Papers | *Memoir* | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley* | By T. Medwin, Esq. | And | Original Poems and Papers | By Percy Bysshe Shelley. | Now first collected. | London: | Whittaker, Treacher, & Co. | 1833.

(The Poems occupy pp. 109-126.)

XVIII.

The | *Poetical Works* | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley.* | Edited | by Mrs. Shelley. | Lui non trov' io, ma suoi santi vestigi | Tutti rivolti alla superna strada | Veggio, lunge da' laghi averni e stigi.—Petrarca. | In Four Volumes. | Vol. I. [II. III. IV.] | London: | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | MDCCCXXXIX.

XIX.

(1) *The* | *Poetical Works* | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley:* | [Vignette of Shelley's Tomb.] London. | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | 1839.

(This is the engraved title-page. The printed title-page runs:—)

(2) The | Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | Edited | By Mrs. Shelley. | [Motto from Petrarch as in XVIII.] | London: | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | M.DCCC.XL.

(Large octavo, printed in double columns. The *Dedication* is dated 11th November, 1839.)

XX.

Essays, | *Letters from Abroad,* | *Translations and Fragments,* | *By* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley.* | Edited | By Mrs. Shelley. | [Long prose motto translated from Schiller] | In Two Volumes. | Vol. I. [II.] | London: | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | MDCCCXL.

XXI.

Relics of Shelley. | Edited by | Richard Garnett. | [Lines 20-24 of *To Jane*: 'The keen stars,' &c.] | London: | Edward Moxon & Co., Dover Street. | 1862.

XXII.

The | *Poetical Works* | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley:* | Including Various Additional Pieces | From MS. and Other Sources. | The Text carefully revised, with Notes and | A Memoir, | By William Michael Rossetti. | Vol. I [II.] | [Moxon's Device.] | London: | E. Moxon, Son, & Co., 44 Dover Street, W. | 1870.

XXIII.

The Daemon of the World | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley | The First Part | as published in 1816 with *Alastor* | The Second Part | Deciphered and now First Printed from his own Manuscript | Revision and Interpolations in the Newly Discovered | Copy of *Queen Mab* | London | Privately printed by H. Buxton Forman | 38 Marlborough Hill | 1876.

XXIV.

The Poetical Works | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley* | Edited by | Harry Buxton Forman | In Four Volumes | Volume I. [II. III. IV.] London | Reeves and Turner 196 Strand | 1876.

XXV.

The Complete | *Poetical Works* | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley.* | The Text carefully revised with Notes and | A Memoir, | by | William Michael Rossetti. | In Three Volumes. | Vol. I. [II. III.] London : | E. Moxon, Son, And Co., | Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, E.C. | 1878.

XXVI.

The Poetical Works | *of Percy Bysshe Shelley* | Given from His Own Editions and Other Authentic Sources | Collated with many Manuscripts and with all Editions of Authority | Together with Prefaces and Notes | His Poetical Translations and Fragments | and an Appendix of | Juvenilia | [Publisher's Device.] Edited by Harry Buxton Forman | In Two Volumes. | Volume I. [II.] London | Reeves and Turner, 196, Strand | 1882.

XXVII.

The | *Poetical Works* | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley* | Edited by | Edward Dowden | London | Macmillan and Co., Limited | New York : The Macmillan Company | 1900.

XXVIII.

The Poetical Works of | *Percy Bysshe Shelley* | Edited with a Memoir by | H. Buxton Forman | In Five Volumes | [Publisher's Device.] Vol. I. [II. III. IV. V.] London | George Bell and Sons | 1892.

XXIX.

The | *Complete Poetical Works* | *of* | *Percy Bysshe Shelley* | The Text newly collated and revised | and Edited with a Memoir and Notes | By George Edward Woodberry | Centenary Edition | In Four Volumes | Volume I. [II. III. IV.] [Publisher's Device.] London | Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. | Limited | 1893.

XXX.

An Examination of the | *Shelley Manuscripts* | *In the Bodleian Library* | Being a collation thereof with the printed | texts, resulting in the publication of | several long fragments hitherto unknown, | and the introduction of many improved | readings into *Prometheus Unbound*, and | other poems, by | C. D. Locock, B.A. | Oxford | At the Clarendon Press | 1903.

The early poems from the Esdaile MS. book, which are included in this edition by the kind permission of the owner of the volume, Charles E. J. Esdaile, Esq., appeared for the first time in Professor Dowden's *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, published in the year 1887.

One poem from the same volume, entitled *The Wandering Jew's Soliloquy*, was printed in one of the Shelley Society Publications (Second Series, No. 12), a reprint of *The Wandering Jew*, edited by Mr. Bertram Dobell, in 1887.

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